

Importance of Support Services
for On- and Off-Campus Graduate Students

by
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Abstract

Importance of Support Services for On- and Off-Campus Graduate Students. Karen M. Galardi, 2012: Applied Dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. Fischler School of Education. ERIC Descriptors: Graduate Students, Student Needs, Support Systems (Services), Multicampus Colleges, Branch Campuses

The number of adult graduate students continues to increase in America's higher education institutions. The needs of the adult learner are diverse, and it is a challenge to institutions to meet the needs of this increasing student population. Institutions have responded by offering programs of study both on campus and expanded program offerings at off-campus locations. However, offering programs at off-campus locations brings a new set of challenges to institutions when trying to meet the support service needs of the adult, graduate student population.

One way to address these challenges was to identify what graduate students valued and what services this student population required, which directly supported and facilitated their educational endeavors. This study identified the support service needs of adult students enrolled in graduate programs on campus and at two off-campus locations, and determined if there was a difference based on gender, program of study, and program location.

Off-campus centers were becoming an increasing occurrence in the American higher education setting. Identifying the support service needs of the adult learner enrolled in graduate programs at varying university locations was imperative to better serve graduate students' educational needs. Shaping the support services offerings to meet the needs of graduate students on campus and at off-campus locations created a mutually beneficial experience for both the adult learner and for members of the university faculty, and staff supporting the graduate student population.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Institutions of higher education in the United States have seen a dramatic change in the demographics of the student population in the past 3 decades. The number of adult students has risen from 27% in 1980 (Donaldson & Townsend, 2007) to over 40% in 2009 (University Continuing Education Association, 2009). In response to this demographic shift, colleges and universities have expanded their resources to offer degree programs at off-campus locations in addition to offering degree programs on campus so that educational opportunities were more accessible to adult students, who were also referred to as nontraditional students. Although program offerings for adult learners were on the rise, many institutions did not always recognize the special needs of the adult learner. The increase in the number of nontraditional students presented challenges to higher education institutions, because services were designed primarily to meet the needs of traditional-aged students who attended class on campus during the day (Bash, 2005). There was limited research available identifying the support services needs of nontraditional students enrolled in graduate programs; particularly for students enrolled in programs at off-campus locations.

The topic. Much of the literature on adult students was focused on the needs of the adult undergraduate student population. There was little research addressing the needs of the adult students enrolled in graduate degree programs. While there were commonalities between the needs of the adult students seeking undergraduate degrees and graduate degrees, the graduate students had previous higher education experiences and their needs may be different. The area of focus in this study was to identify the support service needs of adult students enrolled in graduate programs at on- and off-

campus locations in order to determine what support services were important to them and if their needs were being met.

The research problem. Research studies and related literature in adult learning theory substantiated that the educational needs of the traditional student and the nontraditional student differed significantly (Bash, 2003; Brookfield, 1986). As the enrollment of adult students in higher education continued to increase, higher education continued to offer more types of academic programs at on- and off-campus locations to meet the programmatic needs of these students. The research problem was that there had been little research conducted to quantify the academic and student services needs of adult students enrolled in on- and off-campus graduate degree programs (Linnartz, 2005; Skouras, 2001).

Background and justification. Steltenpohl and Shipton (1986) noted that although colleges welcomed the enrollments of adult students to bolster the declining numbers of traditional students, most institutions had not considered the special needs of adults or their special potential for scholarly work. Many small, liberal arts institutions, often faith based, viewed the adult market as a way to make up for the dwindling number of traditional enrollments by offering friendly programs to the growing number of adult learners (Steltenpohl & Shipton, 1986).

Over the past 3 decades, higher education institutions have been responsive in developing adult-friendly programs. Many institutions now offered online programs, blended programs, and accelerated degree programs (Choitz & Prince, 2008; Wlodkowski, 1999). These programs were designed to reduce the barrier to access for adult learners, focus on teachers as facilitators, and provide curriculum that is relevant to the workplace (Mancuso, 2001; Stokes, 2006; Wlodkowski, 1999). Institutions had also

established off-campus or branch locations offering convenient locations for adult students (Linnartz, 2005; Schwaller, 2009). Bishop-Clark and Lynch (1998) noted that nontraditional students sometimes felt more comfortable attending programs at off-campus locations where there were more adult students, where classes were designed to be more inclusive of the diverse age groups, and the additional personal and professional responsibilities of the older students were recognized.

Although advancements in programs and offerings, which were responsive to adults had occurred, institutions had been slow to respond to the academic and student support services needs of the adult students (Linnartz, 2005; Skouras, 2001). Although an array of support services were available to all students, they might not be available at the time and place convenient for adults. In some instances, institutions did not always recognize what was needed to support adult students (Tannehill, 2009).

Adults also brought different skills and experiences to the classroom as compared to a traditional-aged student. Oftentimes, adults were not as comfortable in the classroom because they believed they were less prepared than the younger students, and this belief affected their self-confidence (Bishop-Clark & Lynch, 1992). Work and life experiences changed the way adult students interacted with faculty. Some adult learners might find it difficult to adjust from an independent status as an adult to one of a student, and were dependent on faculty and administrators for support (Bash, 2003). Additionally, adults had responsibilities outside of school and typically had full- or part-time jobs, family, and home responsibilities; and higher education might not always be their top priority (Bash, 2003). Because adult learners brought different needs when returning to school, institutions needed to rethink how they interacted with this student population and what types of support services were needed by these students.

Deficiencies in the evidence. Rangaswami (1999) noted that research specific to the needs of the part-time adult student had been minimal, and what research had occurred was conducted in the community college setting rather than 4-year institutions. Linnartz (2005) noted that, although there was a growing body of research on adult students enrolled in on-campus programs, there was still little research available that identified the specific academic and student services needs of the adult student enrolled in graduate programs at off-campus locations. Much of the research conducted to establish the support needs for adult learners was the result of inquiries made to administrators about the needs of adult learners and not from the adult learners. There was an urgent need for the development a body of research that identified the specific support services that facilitated successful educational practice with adult students.

Audience. The audience for this research included administrators responsible for adult and graduate programs, and full- and part-time faculty in higher education institutions. The audience also included researchers in the field of adult education and continuing education. Administrators at branch campuses, a growing and vital segment of the American higher education community, would also benefit from this research.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined to provide clarity in this use in this study.

An *accelerated program* is an academic program module, which allows learners to achieve credits in a shortened time period.

An *adult learner* is a student who is over 24 years of age and is enrolled either part time or full time in a program at a higher education institution.

Andragogy is a term that refers the theory of adult learning, which purports that adults learn differently than children and prefer to learn by specific methods of

instruction.

A *barrier* is something impacting the nontraditional student that creates difficulty for or prevents completion of their educational pursuits.

Blended education, also called hybrid education, refers to education that combines face-to-face and online instruction.

Distance learning is a field of education that focuses on teaching methods and technology with the aim of delivering teaching to students who are not physically present in a traditional educational setting.

A *graduate student* is a student participating in postbaccalaureate degree programs, either on a part- or full-time basis.

A *nontraditional student*, also known as an adult learner, is over 24 years of age and enrolled on a part- or full-time basis in a program at a higher education institution.

Off-campus programs are programs offered by an institution at a location that is separated physically from the main campus. These locations may be in a facility owned and operated by the institution or rented for this purpose.

Student services are administrative services offered specifically for students to support their personal or social welfare during their tenure in a program of study at an institution of higher education. These services are usually outside of the academic function and include admissions, financial aid, counseling, registration, career services, and health services.

A *traditional student* is a person between the ages of 18 and 24 years who has not yet assumed any primary responsibility for that individual's personal life.

Purpose of the Study

① The purpose of this study was to identify the support service needs of adult

students enrolled in graduate programs on campus and at off-campus locations. Specifically, this study was designed to determine the students' level of satisfaction with existing services offered at a university's main campus and two off-campus sites, compare and contrast the services offered at the three sites of the university, and identify what support services were most important to adult students.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

There have been dramatic changes in the demographics of students enrolled in higher education programs in the United States in the past 3 decades. In 1980, adult students constituted 27% of the student population (Donaldson & Townsend, 2007). By 2009, adult made up over 40% of the higher education population and there were no signs that the changes in these demographics would abate (University Continuing Education Association, 2009). According to the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education and Statistics (2010), traditional student enrollment was expected to increase by 9% by 2018, while nontraditional student enrollment through 2018 was expected to increase 25% for the 25- to 34-year-olds and 12% for students Age 35 and older.

In response to this demographic shift, some colleges and universities implemented delivering programs in alternative methods, such as accelerated, online, and hybrid formats, in order to meet the needs of a diverse student population. Some institutions expanded their offerings to off-campus locations in addition to offering degree programs on campus so that educational opportunities were more accessible to adult students. Although there had been an expansion in program offerings, delivery methods, and off-campus sites, Linnartz (2005) noted, "there is little research available on the support needs of adult students and those of off-campus adult learners" (p. 4). Because programs varied across institutional locations, it was important that institutions survey the needs of the student populations at all locations in order to serve the growing adult student population both on campus and at off-campus locations.

As this student population continued to rise in number, understanding and meeting the needs of the adult learner became more urgent. The intent of this chapter was to explore the historical background of adults in higher education, to identify the

characteristics of adult learners, to review adult education strategies, to identify the concerns and needs of adult learners, and to identify the support service needs of adult students. Support service needs could be academic or administrative in nature, and encompass areas, such as library resource support, academic advising, business office, parking, bookstore, public safety, and careers center support. In this chapter, a discussion of the relationship between main campuses and branch locations, and the implications for supporting adult learners at branch locations were included.

Perhaps one of the most pressing challenges facing institutions at the time of this study was the ability to make institutional adjustments to expand their involvement with and support of adult learners, particularly students enrolled in graduate programs. Although accrediting agencies recommended minimum standards for student support, these standards did not specifically identify the requirements to meet the special needs of the adult graduate student. The chapter concluded with identifying the challenges of meeting the needs of this student population and reviewing best practices in adult learning.

Historical Review of Traditional Colleges

American colleges and universities had evolved since the days of the colonial colleges. From the time of the establishment of the nine colonial colleges in the 18th century when accessibility to and affordability of education was for the select few, changes in the social, political, and economic structure in the United States had impacted higher education.

The American higher education system had seen a number of initiatives that altered the landscape of higher education. The approval of the Morrill Act in 1862, establishing land grant institutions, promoted the promulgation of professional programs

at higher education institutions (Thelin, 2004). The Morrell Act was also instrumental in providing access to postsecondary education to students in outlying areas by supporting the expansion of branch locations.

In 1944, the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, commonly referred to as the GI Bill, redefined the makeup of the student body in higher education institutions by providing veterans open access to higher education (Curry, Sproat, & Cramer, 1972). The act provided veterans with substantial educational and employment benefits, and was very successful, causing an unprecedented increase in enrollments in higher education institutions. The recommendations of President Johnson's Higher Education Act of 1965 continued to support increased enrollment by adults in U.S. higher education (Curry et al., 1972).

By the 1970s, traditional colleges were finding it increasingly difficult to cope with the changing nature of the college student. Students of different ages, race, gender, and needs emerged to challenge the traditional structure of higher education institutions whose services were built around the needs of the traditional student body (Bash, 2003; Steltenpohl & Shipton, 1986). By the 1990s, American consumerism, combined with advancing technology, led to students to be able to mix and match online learning with traditional classroom settings. This led to nontraditional students showing an increasing amount of interest in higher education, with institutions still struggling to meet their needs (Thelin, 2003).

As higher education entered the 21st century, institutions continued to be challenged by the rapidly changing needs of society. In what was known as the knowledge era, how individuals learn and why individuals learn might be more important than what they learn (Vogt, 1995). Vogt (1995) noted that, with the focus shifting from

the content of learning to the process of learning, there was a need to redesign the traditional learning processes to emphasize the skill of learning, rather than focusing solely upon traditional courses and knowledge transfer. In addition to this shift, institutions also continued to struggle with identifying the support services that adult students required as delivery options proliferated.

Traditional Services for Students on Campus

The roots of the student affairs profession could be traced back to the colonial colleges. The practice of student affairs had evolved and developed since that time, influenced by changing religious, economic, social, and political forces (Nuss, 2003). The student affairs profession displayed two distinct philosophies with respect to providing student services. One philosophy was to design and provide services to meet the developmental needs of students. This philosophy focused on the commitment to and the development of the whole person supported by the entire academic community (Nuss, 2003). The second philosophy was to manage the specific administrative responsibilities of student affairs work (McEwen, 2003). This work included meeting the administrative responsibilities related to students' social and disciplinary needs.

Because the student affairs profession was designed to meet the needs of the traditional-aged student, this presented challenges in meeting the needs of the adult learner because the needs of the adults varied significantly from that of the traditional-aged student (Bash, 2003). Younger students had a much greater need for support in the developmental needs of orientation and social activities (Kasworm, 1982). Traditional students required more engagement in the social aspects of collegiate life, such as inclusion in student groups, residence life experiences, and related activities. Kasworm (1982) noted that adults had significantly more needs than younger students, and these

needs were much more diverse than that of the traditional student. According to Bash (2003), the fundamental needs of adult student differed from traditional-aged student because adults were seasoned individuals and savvy customers, and significant problems with adult programs appeared when there was little or no foundational support from the institution for adult-centered programs. While services might be readily available for all students, many times adult students did not have the opportunity to utilize these services as, oftentimes, these services were designed and scheduled for the traditional student body (Skouras, 2001). Colleges and universities recognized that adult students had different needs than traditional-aged students, yet were unsure of how to meet their needs (Tannenhill, 2009). In addition, the retention of adult students had been insufficiently studied and measured and, with the continued increase in adult enrollments, this lack of examination led to significant information gaps in terms of college and university performance measurement and strategy (Fincher, 2009).

Trends in Higher Education

Within the past decade, adult learners became close to becoming the majority of the learners on college campuses and this trend did not appear to be abating. Total student enrollment in U.S. higher education institutions was expected to climb from 18.2 million in 2007 to 20.6 million in 2018, a 13% increase (University Continuing Education Association, 2009). Projections indicated that students 25 to 34 years old would increase by 25%, students Age 35 and older would increase by 12%, while students 18 to 24 years old would only increase by 9% (University Continuing Education Association, 2009).

The U.S. population was growing at a faster pace than that of other industrialized nations and was fueled, in part, by immigration (University Continuing Education Association, 2009). Although the population was growing, literacy skills were declining

among the U.S. population. The educational attainment of U.S. students continued to compare unfavorably with that of students in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries (University Continuing Education Association, 2009). Among the 30 OECD countries, in 2006, the United States ranked 21st in science, a decline from 19th in 2003, and down from 14th in 2000. In mathematics, the United States ranked 25th among the 30 OECD countries. Lastly, 28% of the U.S. 15-year-olds did not reach the baseline level of mathematics proficiency, as compared to the average of 21% for the remaining OECD countries (University Continuing Education Association, 2009).

Adult literacy skills are also declining in the United States (University Continuing Education Association, 2009). The National Assessment of Adult Literacy measured how adults used written information in the workplace, community, and family settings. A study conducted by the U.S. Department of Education (2007) assessed three types of literacy: prose literacy or the knowledge and skills needed to search, comprehend, and use information from continuous texts; document literacy, which was the ability to use information from noncontinuous texts; and quantitative literacy. The average prose literacy scores for adults had declined between 1992 and 2003 for adults (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). Of the three literacy scales, a higher percentage of adults with proficient literacy were employed in professional, managerial, and business jobs, with lower proficiencies seen in the service industries (U.S. Department of Education, 2007).

Workforce Development

Changes in the U.S. demographics, societal patterns, technological advances, and globalization necessitate new learning and retraining. Changes in business and industry

called for employees to learn new skills to adapt to the rapid advances in technology (Cornish, 2004; Rangaswami, 1999). According to the Hart Research Associates (2009), “Employers want their employees to use a broader set of skills and have higher levels of learning and knowledge than in the past to meet the increasingly complex demands they will face in the workplace” (p. 1).

A variety of economic trends and indicators suggested why lifelong learning was important for business and industry. Given the rapid changes in technology, the globalization of trade, and the new information age, corporations were looking to higher education institutions to prepare the future workforce. Barrow and Keeney (2003) noted that although the educational systems were trying to meet the perceived needs of businesses and provide hands-on, business specific and technological skills, what businesses were in most need of were graduates who had strong, analytic, interpersonal, and communication abilities. Adult students brought a bank of knowledge to the classroom and, in this information age, employees were looking for flexibility as a foundation for success. Workforce development inferred that that institutions had a moral responsibility to ensure that students possessed more than just skills that might grow obsolete as technology advances, but adult students must acquire critical-thinking skills, which allowed them to adjust to changing job markets.

In this era where how individuals learned and why they learned might be more important than what they learned, it was important that institutions focus on building skills that could support development strategies for employees (Vogt, 1995). The global economy and rapidly changing technology continued to alter the landscape of the U.S. workplace and the jobs that were emerging were very different and required different kinds of workers and different kinds of preparation. There was a growing mismatch

between the jobs that would be created over the next decade and the education and training of U.S. adult workers (Cantor, 2006; Sloate, 2010a).

Increasing postsecondary attainment was an urgent national priority for ensuring economic growth and prosperity in the United States (Offenstein & Shulock, 2009). The demand for production jobs in the manufacturing area were projected to continue to decrease, with demand for professional occupations to increase. More than 70% of the 5.2 million new professional jobs would be in three areas: health care practitioner and technical occupations, education, and computer and mathematical science. Of the fastest growing occupations from 2008 to 2018, 14 required a baccalaureate degree and seven required some postsecondary training (Sloate, 2010b).

A combination of personal choice and occupational demands would result in an increasing amount of adults enrolling in higher education institutions in the coming years. Nontraditional students might return to college in order to complete a degree they might not have been able to complete as a traditional undergraduate student. Changes in the economy or the loss of a job may precipitate students rethinking college (Sloate, 2010c). Adults might evaluate the skills they needed to adapt to the changing environment and return to college. Whether the motivations were intrinsic or extrinsic, the need for an educated workforce would increase the number of adults returning to college over the next 10 years (University Continuing Education Association, 2009).

Women Enrollment

Enrollment by women in higher education had expanded rapidly since the early 20th century. At the time of this study, women made up the majority of students, earning the majority of the bachelor's degrees (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). Women also made up the majority of students seeking graduate degrees, with 60% of all graduate

students being women in the 2005-2006 academic year (University Continuing Education Association, 2009).

As women continued to enroll in larger numbers than men, women also brought unique needs and issues when they returned to school. According to Terrell (1990), women might suffer from development issues, which could include issues of guilt of not being there for their children if they pursued educational opportunities. They might also feel responsible for the maintenance of the family in addition to school, which might hinder progress and lead to retention issues. There might also be a lack of support from family members and spouses (Harris & Brooks, 1998; Howell, 2003). Any number of these issues might also impact a woman's ability to continue education once enrolled, and institutions might or might not have the support services available for the special needs of female students.

Although women's enrollment continued to rise, there was a marked underrepresentation of women in science and technology fields. It was documented in research that female students in male-dominated fields thought more about changing their majors more than their counterparts in more traditional fields because of anticipated sex discrimination (Lips, 2007). The use of models or mentors supported women's enrollment in underrepresented fields was successful because women might resist choosing this option: They believed that moving in this area would cause fundamental changes in who they were. Institutions that supported mentoring programs could assist women in pursuing a career of their true interest because they would observe someone like themselves in a field that they would otherwise avoid. Mentoring had proven to be beneficial in supporting all learners; in particular, those who had been hardest to engage in learning because of previous negative educational experiences or exclusion (Malach,

2000).

Adult Learning Theory

The most prominent scholar-practitioner of adult learning theory was Knowles. Knowles devoted most of Knowles' professional life to adult education and pioneered the field of adult learning in the United States during the second half of the 20th century (Bash, 2003). Knowles introduced the andragological model of learning, which distinguished the learning needs of adult learners from those of children. Although the concept of andragogy, which was based on humanistic and behavioral psychology, had been used since the 1830s, Knowles popularized the term and the concept (Smith, 2002).

Knowles' theory was based on five assumptions about adult learners:

1. Adults had a need to be self-directing in their learning process.
2. Adults had a bank of experiences, which served as a broad base to relate new information.
3. Adults became ready to learn when they required information or new skills to fulfill a new role in society.
4. Adults had problem-centered orientation and sought information that they could apply to real-life problems.
5. Adults were more intrinsically motivated than extrinsically motivated (Lee, 1998).

Knowles characterized adult learners as being self-directed and having a need to control over their learning and be actively involved in the learning process (Bash, 2003). It was not sufficient that an adult sat in a classroom and listen: The adult learner needed to be engaged in the learning process. Adult learners also exhibited a high level of autonomy as they made conscious and informed choices among learning formats and how

best to achieve their personal learning goals (Brookfield, 1986). Adults came to school with a bank of experiences, including work activities, family responsibilities, and previous educational experiences, which served as a base for educational endeavors. Adults were, oftentimes, eager to take a leadership role in group activities. Adults acquired their self-identity from their experiences, and when adults found their experiences being minimized, it was not just their experiences being minimized, but also who they were (Bash, 2003).

Adults were goal oriented and returned to an educational environment when they required new skills or information (Bash, 2003). Adult students typically knew what they wanted to attain when they enrolled in a course or program. They also looked to see if an educational program was organized and illustrated how the program would help them attain their goals. Adults were relevancy oriented and felt they must see a reason for learning something new (Bash, 2003). They had a problem-centered orientation and sought information that they could apply to real-life problems and work settings. Course assignments were applicable to the workplace and were not seen as a waste of time led to the practicality of learning.

Finally, adults were more intrinsically motivated than extrinsically motivated when returning to school (Lee, 1998). The benefits of a promotion or raise might be a factor in an adult deciding to return to school; however, oftentimes, the primary motivation adults return to school was intrinsic.

Adult development. As a person moved through the different stages in life, an individual's orientation could also change significantly (Schlossberg, Lynch, & Chickering, 1989). Adults were subject to increasing responsibility and complexities in life-achieving competence, managing emotions, becoming interdependent, establishing

identity, clarifying purposes, freeing interpersonal relationships, and developing integrity (Schlossberg et al., 1989). Adult learners were typically highly motivated, achievement orientated, and relatively independent with special needs for flexible schedules and instructional methods appropriate for their developmental level (Aslanian, 2006; Cross, 1981). Adults generally preferred a more active role in their learning and looked for ways to incorporate academic learning into their personal and professional lives (Bash, 2003; Cross, 1981). Cross (1981) stated that adult learners also knew what they wanted out of college and were challenged, rather than bored with classes.

Because adults tended to underestimate their academic abilities by overemphasizing their previous educational experiences, it was sometimes difficult to accurately determine the needs of the adult learner (Knox, 1980). There was no significant correlation between high school grades and college performance for adults (Kasworm & Pike, 1994). In addition, SAT and ACT scores were of little value in predicting adult student performance (Moffatt, 1993). Knox (1980) stated that the most valuable information relative to adults was being able to identify their proficiencies of knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Adult student motivation. According to Knowles, the motivation to learn for adult students was internal as they looked for ways to increase their self-esteem, recognition, self-confidence, and a better quality of life (Bash, 2003). Two criteria for adulthood offered by Knowles (1980) were being insightful with respect to motivation. First, a person who was an adult to the extent that they are performing social roles typically assigned by society to those considered to be adults. They encompassed the roles of a spouse, parent, and responsible citizen. Second, people were adults to the extent that they saw themselves responsible for their own life. Responsibility was the

cornerstone of adult motivation and cultures held adults more responsible for their actions than they did children. When adults could see that the learning made sense and was important to their values and perspectives, internal motivation emerged (Knowles, 1980).

Extrinsic motivation was also a factor in adults returning to college. External circumstances, such as the loss of a job, bereavement, or divorce, might prompt an adult to return to the classroom. Changes and increasing demands found in the workplace were also other reasons adults returned to school. Changes in technological advances and increasing globalization necessitated new learning and retraining so that employees could learn new skills to adapt to the rapid advances in technology (Cornish, 2004; Rangaswami, 1999). Lastly, many corporations had very knowledgeable and experienced workers whose progress had been stopped because of the lack of credentials (Bash, 2003). Employees without the appropriate credentials might fear being managed by a less experienced, younger boss with appropriate credentials, and this fear might lead them back to school.

Adult Education

Adult education, be it undergraduate or graduate, had certain commonalities. Among these were that all participants were legally classified as adults, they engaged in critical reflection, they were participating in a purposeful exploration of some topic, the learning took place in some form of group setting, and the results of the experience guided future actions (Brookfield, 1986).

Gagne (as cited in Brookfield, 1986) posited that the adult educator could not predetermine what would happen in adult learning because each adult learner brought personal and unique experiences to the learning situation. This combination of practical, theoretical, and experiential defined adult education (Brookfield, 1986).

Learning needed to be centered on the learner and the role of educator was one of transfer of power from provider to learner. Because adults were participating in the teaching-learning environment, learning was now more of a pact between teacher and learner. This should not be seen as a threat to traditional faculty, but as an opportunity for faculty to acquire a range of new skills and knowledge in order to support the adult learner (Longworth, 2003).

Adult learning strategies. A great deal of learning for adults was a consequence of creating and supporting an environment in which they could learn from each other (Knowles, 1986; Knox, 1980; Zemke & Zemke, 1984). Before a teacher could successfully engage with adult learners, they had to recognize certain facts about this population (Lieb, 1991). Because adults were autonomous and self-directed, bringing life experiences to the classroom, being goal and relevancy oriented, and demanding respect; individuals who failed to recognize these factors when teaching adults might lead to an unsuccessful teaching-learning experience for the teacher and the adult learner.

Lieb (1991) stated that, in order for learning to be successful, four key elements must be present: motivation, reinforcement, retention, and transference. In addition, the learner must see the relevance of participating in the learning activity (Brookfield, 1986; Lieb, 1991). There was a need for mutual respect in the classroom: Behavior, practices, or statements that belittle others should not be tolerated (Bash, 2003; Brookfield, 1986).

Motivation, although intrinsic, could be enhanced by motivating instructors. Wlodkowski (1999) identified five core characteristics that could be learned, controlled, and planned by instructors who worked with adults. These pillars, as Wlodkowski (1999) called them, were expertise, empathy, enthusiasm, clarity, and cultural responsiveness. The most beneficial approach an instructor could take was to view these pillars as skills

and not as abstractions or personality traits. By viewing them as skills, they could be learned and improved upon through practice and effort.

Adult education strategies. Brookfield (1986) defined six principles of effective practice in adult education that must be present for the educational experience to be successful. These principles were voluntary participation, mutual respect among all parties to the learning, collaborative facilitation, praxis, critical reflection, and working toward self-direction and empowerment. Each of these principles guided the strategies that are essential pieces of adult education.

Voluntary participation could be intrinsic or extrinsic, but the decision to enter the learning environment was the learner's decision. According to Knowles, adults became ready to learn when they required information or new skills to fulfill a new role in society (Bash, 2003). The principle of mutual respect was characterized by a respect among participants for each other's self-worth. Bash (2003) noted that adults acquired their self-identity from their experiences and when adults found their experiences being minimized in the classroom setting, they did not feel respected. Therefore, although constructive criticism and lively debates might be found in the classroom setting, attention must be paid to the ideal that increasing adults' sense of self-worth underlies all facilitation efforts. Facilitation was seen as collaborative, with faculty and students engaged in a cooperative enterprise. Adults brought their bank of experiences, which served as a broad base, to relate new information in discussing a spirit of collaboration. Praxis was at the center of effective facilitation. The learners and facilitators were involved in a continual process of activity, reflection, collaborative analysis, or new activity (Brookfield, 1986). The aims of facilitation were to foster a spirit of critical reflection in adults. Through their educational experiences, they came to question many aspects of their professional,

personal, and political lives (Brookfield, 1986). The goal of facilitation was the nurturing of self-directed, empowered adults to see themselves as proactive, empowered individuals.

Adult education strategies might be operational or transactional in nature, and the most effective adult education strategies used a mix of both (Brookfield, 1986). An operational approach to facilitative learning was the effective practice of any activity in which adults were being taught how to acquire certain skills and knowledge, irrespective of content and context (Brookfield, 1986). The transactional approach was that education was essentially a transactional encounter in which learners and teachers are engaged in a continual process of negotiation of priorities, methods, and evaluative criteria (Brookfield, 1986). The operational and transactional approaches differed from the authoritarian style, which involved the one-way transmission of knowledge and skills. The transactional approach did not mean the facilitators abdicated their responsibility for contributing to the standards, values, and criteria in education, but, instead, allowed for the continual process of learning occurring between facilitator and student.

According to Brookfield (1986), adults change over their lifespan and what strategies that worked best for a younger adult might not be as effective for an older adult. As an example, long-term memory improves with age while short-term memory does not. Brookfield (2010) noted that adapting one's personal style to meet the needs of a particular student body was an ongoing process of assessment and change. Just as students would evolve and change during a particular semester, it was important that the instructor practice critical reflection.

Barriers to Adult Education

Most adult students had multiple obligations of family, career, social, and civic

responsibilities, which competed for a student's time, energy, and resources. The transition from work to college was complex and concerning to students returning to the classroom. The barriers that deterred adult learners from entering college to further their education could be institutional, informational, situational, or psychological (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982).

Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) stated that informational barriers included areas, such as program marketing and admissions processes. The decision for adults to seek additional education was influenced by the students' understanding of available resources and procedures. Individuals varied greatly in their level of institutional understanding and, by making the processes easily navigable and understandable, it allowed prospective students to have confidence in their decisions.

Institutional barriers were also common within the adult population, and encompassed areas that included support services and instructional delivery. If support service were not adult friendly, then adult students would look elsewhere to identify a program and institution that met their needs. The lack of institutional knowledge and an understanding of institutional bureaucracy was also a barrier to adult students (Goto & Martin, 2009). The lack of knowing where to go for information relevant to their educational endeavors, such as financial aid information, or how to order books for online courses, were very real concerns to adult learners.

Situational barriers were areas in which particular situations within an adult's life might prohibit their furthering their education, such as child care issues, transportation, or financial issues (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982). Some institutions had the capacity to provide support to address situational barriers; however, due to the fact that support services were developed for the traditional student, not all institutions were prepared to

address the situational barriers facing adult students.

Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) noted that psychological barriers were often the most daunting for institutions to attempt to address. Psychological barriers could be major life issues, such as marriage or family problems, birth of a child, or divorce, which could impede students from enrolling. Once enrolled, counselors could help adults adjust to stress and show that these changes were opportunities for personal growth (Knox, 1980). There were also issues of self-doubt that deters students. Many adults had a negative attitude to formal learning and looked back on their school years with distaste and even anxiety (Knapper & Cropely, 1985). They recalled school as a place where they were made to feel incompetent. Institutions were least likely to be able to address the psychological barriers stopping prospective students from furthering their education (Goto & Martin, 2009).

Most often, institutions concentrate on addressing the areas they can directly influence, such as informational barriers and institutional barriers. Considering the growth of adult enrollments, institutions must look to improve responsiveness to the needs of nontraditional students (Goto & Martin, 2009; Linnartz, 2005; Rangaswami, 1999; Wlodkowski, Mauldin, & Campbell, 2002).

Alternative Delivery Methods for Adult Programs

In order to meet the demands of an increasingly market-driven environment, coupled with advancing technologies, the increase of alternative delivery methods of instruction occurred since the 1980s. The adoption of alternative delivery methods, such as accelerated programs, online programs, and hybrid programs, increased as the adult student population continued to rise. Alternative delivery methods for delivering programs to meet the needs of a growing student population who required access to

course work in a nontraditional format due to life and work responsibilities were essential (Deggs & Kendra-Kacirek, 2010; Schlough & Dittmann, 2010).

Support Services Requirements of the Adult Learner

Competition for adult learners was intense between the traditional bricks-and-mortar schools to distance learning providers, corporate colleges, and proprietary institutions (Kelson & Lesik, 2005). Bash (2003) stated that if an institution could not or would not provide the adult learner with a product the learner valued, in a manner that was acceptable, the student would go elsewhere. Kelson and Lesik (2005) posited that successful adult programs, above all other requirements, needed to be convenient. Not only did the location need to be convenient, the courses needed to be offered at times and in formats that met adults' busy schedules. Services, such as admissions, advising, registration, business office, and bookstore, must be located in one central location and have hours that were convenient for the adult learner. Parking should be safe, free, and near classrooms. According to Book (2010), adult students required effective orientation programs, offering sessions at varied times during the beginning of the semester. Making critical academic and administrative services available when adults were on campus affirmed the adults' value to the institution and made them a part of the university culture. If financially feasible, institutions should publicize scholarship opportunities and offer child care services to adults, which could increase the retention rates of adults.

In 2007, Noel-Levitz, Inc., in partnership with the Council for Experiential Learning (CAEL), published *The 2007 National Adult Learners' Satisfaction-Priorities Report*. The report included data from over 27,000 students from 80 two-and four-year institutions and was compiled over a 3-year period, from Fall 2003 to Spring 2007. There were nine top enrollment factors for adult undergraduate students listed in descending

order: (a) academic reputation; (b) availability of evening or weekend courses; (c) future employment opportunities; (d) campus location; (e) financial aid or scholarships; (f) cost; (g) personalized attention prior to enrollment; (h) recommendations from family, friends, or employer; and (i) size of the institution.

Although research on adult students continued to grow, there was still limited research on adult learners attending graduate classes both on campus and at off-campus locations (Linnartz, 2005). Linnartz (2005) noted that most off-campus graduate students wanted similar services as their counterparts at main locations: easy access to program information and admissions processes, convenient locations, and comfortable classroom settings. Carpenter, Sullivan, and Zimmerman (2009) noted that mentoring was also an important component to graduate school experience. When a student was familiar with faculty, the student should be encouraged to choose a mentor or mentors with whom there was compatibility both personally and professionally instead of having a mentor chosen for the individual. If students were assigned chairs or directors, they often lose their independence to choose or collaborate freely with a mentor with whom they have personal and professional affinity. Ultimately, a mentor was an advocate for the students and not having the ability to collaborate freely with a mentor might lead to the quality of their scholarship to be compromised (Carpenter et al., 2009).

Educational environment. Creating a learning environment that met the needs of the adult student was fundamental to the success of adult education programs. Adults generally preferred a more active role in their educational environment, so the challenge was to create a supportive environment where adults were responsible for their own learning. Adult students also required flexible schedules and instructional methods appropriate for their developmental level (Cross, 1981; Wlodkowski et al., 2002).

Because services on traditional campuses were developed to support traditional students, institutions must look at existing services to see how well they met the needs of the adult student population.

Branch locations. In response to an increased need to serve the adult students, institutions recognized that branch or off-campus locations were a growing and vital segment of the American higher education community. Attracting the adult student called for the location to offer a desirable array of academic programs and attractive facilities (McGrath, 2009). Branch locations should be geographically located in a growing population area.

It was vital that an institution had a clear sense of its identity and how the branch location and programs fit within the mission, vision, and strategic goals of the institution. Institutions might choose to offer a program not offered on the main campus to attract a different student population, but the limitations were that the support services to meet the needs of these students might also be limited.

Adult students might feel more comfortable at the off-campus locations because administrators and faculty who chose to work at off-campus sites did so because they believed in supporting adult learners (Flora & Hirt, 2008). Flora and Hirt (2008) noted that administrators and faculty at off-campus locations wanted to create and support access for students who were otherwise unable to attend classes on traditional campuses in a traditional format. Branch locations needed a place for students to congregate and a place to facilitate interaction between faculty and students (McGrath, 2009). Institutions who accepted qualified students at a branch location should make every effort to help the student succeed by creating and supporting an environment that supported adult learning. Whether an adult student enrolled in a program on campus or at off-campus location,

creating a learning environment that met the needs of the adult learner was a vital element to a successful program. Institutions that overlooked the needs of this student body risked the loss of these students as they would look to alternative institutions who better met their needs.

Distance learning. Although distance education programs were designed to meet the needs of a student population who were unable to attend class in the traditional on-campus environment, institutions still needed to examine the experiences of distance learners to determine if the institution was meeting the expectations of these students (Deggs & Kenda-Kacirek, 2010; Schlough & Dittmann, 2010). Deggs and Kenda-Kacirek (2010) noted that institutions needed to identify new methods for evaluating the quality of online degree programs that would assess student learning outcomes to determine if they were congruent with course and degree objectives. In addition to assessing student learning outcomes, institutions must also examine student experiences and interaction with faculty. Institutions needed to evaluate faculty practices to determine if faculty members were creating an online learning environment that promoted interaction and communication. Lastly, the institution needed to evaluate the support systems offered by the university. These support systems included student services, academic support, and technical support. Schlough and Dittmann (2010) stated that distance learners needed and expected full-service support outside of curriculum in order to succeed.

Institutional Challenges to Meeting the Needs of Adult Students

Bash (2003) stated, "The most significant problem with adult programs appears when there is little or no foundational support from the institution" (p. 6). The successful integration of and support for nontraditional students was contingent on the institution's

commitment to improving opportunities and support to these students. The key to providing this support was convenience, which meant flexibility within the institutional environment.

Institutions using a disproportionate amount of adjunct faculty, and reduced maintenance and overhead resources for adult programs many times lead to adult programs being treated as cash cows to support an institutional bottom line. Although senior leadership and the board of trustees had a fiduciary responsibility to ensure an institutions financial stability, they must also be well versed in the needs of the adult learners (Bash, 2003).

The challenges of providing the necessary support for adults at off-campus locations are compounded by the complexities of relationships in multicampus systems. The interests of the main campus and that of branch locations were not necessarily congruent (Kalikow, 2009). It might be important that there was value in centralization of some functions for reasons of economies of scale. The institution could function only if policy formation was centralized. The challenge to branch campuses was that it was sometimes difficult for branch locations to evaluate themselves, particularly with respect to system-wide objectives. Internal communication must be reliable and consistent across the system and, if communications break down, the system becomes fragmented. In order for branch locations to be effective, institutions must devise a governance and administrative system that maximized the benefits of both centralized and decentralized activities and provided coordination when appropriate (Dengerink, 2009).

Flora and Hirt (2008) stated that although off-site locations were more supportive of adult learners, administrative issues arise at multicampus universities. Multicampus universities with comprehensive strategic planning efforts were the most effective and

efficient organizations; however, universities with various locations still suffered from fragmentation, duplication, and inconsistency across a range of activities and academic programs, and unaddressed concerns of faculty and students (Winchester & Sterk, 2006). The rules and regulations crafted for a larger campus with many more functions might be needlessly complicated for a smaller location (Kalikow, 2009). In addition, the branch location might operate on a different calendar with accelerated offering, yet the traditional academic calendar drove the operational activities.

Many times, branch locations were not located in or near a major city and might have limited access to external resources. Institutions might suffer from a lack of public transportation, nearby food service, and a limited external engagement with the surrounding community. This situation, confounded by the lack of understanding of the needs of the adult learner, led to inadequate support services for the students enrolled for courses at the branch location.

Best Practices in Adult Learning

While many institutions were interested in enrolling adult students and made multiple accommodations and enhancements to existing services, oftentimes, these efforts were piecemeal and fragmented. Graduate students were a diverse group and had varying needs, yet little research regarding the support service needs of graduate students, particularly those students located at branch locations, had been conducted (Linnartz, 2005; Skouras, 2001). Institutions should look to best practices in adult education to determine how to meet the needs of the nontraditional learners within an institution's mission, vision, and values.

Quality standards for accelerated programs. In order to meet the needs of adult, accelerated students in higher education, the Quality Standards for Accelerated

Programs were developed in 2002 with support from Regis University. According to Ashton-Savage et al. (2002), the mission statement was “to provide a common set of values that characterize excellence in accelerated programs for adult learners at the university level” (p. 1). The standards were developed based on the criteria using the following established documents: *Middle States Commission Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education*, *Baldrige National Quality Program Education Criteria*, *New Ventures Quality in an Accelerated Program*, *American Council on Education Principles of Good Practice*, and *North Central Accreditation Principles of Good Practice*. The following section briefly explained the nine principles developed in support of best practice standards for adult accelerated programs.

1. Program mission and integrity. The program had a mission statement that reflected an educational philosophy, goals, purposes, and general intent of adult accelerated programs and that clearly complements the institutional mission, demonstrated adherence to ethical standards and its own stated policies, and had processes in place to ensure the activities it sponsors were offered with integrity and were responsive to adult learners and the community.

2. Leadership and administration. The program’s leadership and administrative structures were sufficient, appropriate, and stable for accomplishing the program’s mission, and institutional leaders demonstrated a commitment to and embrace the concept of accelerated adult learning models.

3. Student, stakeholder, and market focus. The program determined requirements, expectations, and preferences of current and future adult students, stakeholders, and markets to ensure the continuing relevance of educational programs and services to develop new opportunities.

4. Planning and resource allocation. The program conducted ongoing planning and resource allocation based on its mission and used the results of its assessment activities for program renewal, and the institution allocated sufficient human, fiscal, and learning resources to support the goals of the program.

5. Educational offerings. The degree programs offered were consistent with adult learning theory, the institution's mission, and student and stakeholder needs; demonstrated academic rigor and congruence between learning objectives and outcomes; and provided diverse learning experiences that responded to the characteristics and contexts of adult learners while meeting established criteria.

6. Student support services. The program would provide student support services appropriate to adult student strengths and needs, reflective of institutional and programmatic mission, and readily accessible regardless of place or delivery format. These services enable adult learners to succeed from admission to graduation by recognizing, responding to, and honoring the diversity in preparedness, work and family commitments, goals, and other characteristics of adult students.

7. Faculty effectiveness. The program's instructional offerings were developed, delivered, evaluated, and facilitated by qualified professionals. The program's faculty shared a commitment to serve adult learners in an accelerated format and had the attitudes, knowledge, and skills required to facilitate and assess the learning of these students.

8. Facilities and auxiliary services. Facilities and auxiliary services necessary for the successful achievement of the program's mission were readily accessible, available, and responsive to program students, faculty, and staff. This might include off-site locations, classrooms, bookstore, parking, security, food services, and housekeeping.

9. Assessment and continuous improvement. The program provided evidence of continuous assessment of its various components to ensure the maintenance of quality, the assurance of accountability, and the achievement of desired outcomes for its future development and improvement.

The criteria outlined in the Quality Standards for Accelerated Programs were designed to assist institutions in assessing their organizational effectiveness and to serve as a working tool for continuous improvement through planning, program development, and outcomes assessment. The criteria were also designed as guidelines for those organizations or individuals who sought to examine and evaluate the quality of accelerated degree programs for adult learners (Ashton-Savage et al., 2002).

Adult learning focused institution. In 2000, the CAEL's Adult Learning Focused Institution, supported by the Lumina Foundation for Education, created the principles of effective practices. These practices were tested within focus groups of adult learners, educators, employers, union representatives, policymakers, and others interested in adult learning. In the Principles of Effectiveness for Serving Adult Learners, processes and approaches that institutions could adopt in order to seek improved access and quality for students were described. The policies and practices developed by CAEL were not prescriptive, but were meant as a framework for assessing institutional commitment to and the capacity for meeting the needs of adults. The goal of CAEL's Adult Learning Focused Institution Initiative was to help colleges and universities improve learning opportunities for working adults and the employers who supported their education (CAEL, 2000).

In the following section, the eight principles are briefly explained, which were developed by CAEL (2000) and provided best practices and examples of performance

indicators in for each practice:

1. Outreach. The institution conducted its outreach to adult learners by overcoming barriers of time, place, and tradition in order to create lifelong access to educational opportunities. Examples of outreach were on- and off-campus information sessions, online information, multiple instructional sites, and multiple instructional delivery options.

2. Life and career planning. The institution addressed adult learner's life and career goals before or at the onset of enrollment in order to assess and align its capacities to help learners reach their goals. Services in this area included orientation sessions that helped adults assess their educational decisions, and individual advising sessions to assist adults in career and educational planning.

3. Financing. The institution promoted choice using an array of payment options for adult learners in order to expand equity and financial flexibility. Support areas for financing included readily available information on financial options of deferred payment, online payment options, and institutional scholarships for adult students.

4. Assessment of learning outcomes. The institution defined and assessed the knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired by adult learners from the curriculum and from life-work experience in order to assign credit and confer degrees with rigor. This included designing educational experiences using learning outcomes, and promoting problem solving and teamwork in the educational environment.

5. Teaching-learning process. The institution's faculty used multiple methods of instruction (including experiential and problem-based methods) for adult learners in order to connect curricular concepts to useful knowledge and skills. Examples of teaching-learning support included interactive classroom environments, facilitative learning

methods, and the use of students as facilitators within the classroom environment.

6. Student support systems. The institution assisted adult learners using comprehensive academic and student support systems in order to enhance students' capacities to become self-directed, lifelong learners. Academic and student support services included flexible course schedules, flexible time frames for registration, billing and advising services, and orientation sessions developed based on the course delivery format.

7. Technology. The institution used information technology to provide relevant and timely information and to enhance the learning experience. Technology could be used to build a sense of community within and outside of the classroom, and to provide timely and flexible educational and administrative services.

8. Strategic partnerships. The institution engaged in strategic relationships, partnerships, and collaborations with employers and other organizations in order to develop and improve educational opportunities for adult learners. This included using prior learning assessment and working with organizations to establish ways to measure the impact of education programs on the goals of the organizations.

CAEL designed these principles so that an institution could determine the level of the institution's adult student focus. In order for an institution to determine if it met the Adult Learning Focused Institution Initiative criteria, a group of representatives from across the institution determined if each performance indicator was in place, not in place, or in development. The institution also used a survey instrument designed by Noel-Levitz, Inc., that assessed what was important to adult students and what were the performance gaps for each principle. The combination of the self-assessment and the Noel Levitz survey provided the institution data to determine where they were meeting

the student's needs, where they fell short, and where attention was required. An institution, or a school or college within an institution could apply to CAEL to become recognized as an Adult Learning Focused Initiative, a designation of prestige for adult educators.

Many practitioners in adult higher education were able to recognize and advocate for the practical and logistical needs of the learner; however, they did not always have the resources to identify the comprehensive list of services that adult students require. The Quality Standards for Adult Accelerated Programs and The Adult Learner Focused Institution Initiative were resources available to adult educators, thereby, enabling them to better advocate for the adult student population.

Summary

In the review of literature, the needs of the adult learners were shown to be diverse. Institutions of higher education responded to the programmatic needs of adult learners by developing and offering programs in alternative delivery modes, such as accelerated, online, and hybrid programs, and at off-campus branch locations. Although the programmatic needs were being addressed, the institutions had been slow to respond to the support service needs of their enrolled adult students (Linnartz, 2005; Skouras, 2001).

Institutions should look to develop programs and services that assist the nontraditional students with overcoming the barriers that often prevent them from successfully enrolling in programs (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982; Goto & Martin, 2009; Tannehill, 2009). Institutions also need to identify the services needed to provide a supportive environment once adult students were enrolled in graduate programs. The retention and accompanying services needed by adult students had been insufficiently

studied and measured, and the lack of information led to a significant gap with respect to the performance measurements and strategies of colleges and universities (Fincher, 2009).

The review of literature indicated that adult learners had definitive needs. In order for higher education institutions to serve this growing population, institutions should consider the concerns of the nontraditional student and provide suitable support services that are easily accessible and convenient. Support services would vary from institution to institution, and most likely between locations at the same institution. It was the responsibility of an institution and adult educators to identify and provide the support services that were essential to the success of the adult learner.

Research Questions

Four research questions guided this research study:

1. To what extent do nontraditional students use the support services at the on- and off-campus locations at the university?
2. What is the nontraditional student satisfaction with the support services offered at the university's on- and off-campus locations?
3. Does the use of particular services vary significantly by gender, degree program, or campus or site location?
4. What support services are most important and least important to adult students enrolled in graduate degree programs at the university?

Chapter 3: Methodology

Participants

The purpose of this quantitative study, with a qualitative component, was to identify the support service needs of adult students enrolled in graduate programs on campus and at off-campus locations. The location for the study was a private, not-for-profit, Catholic university located in the northeast region of the United States. The university has a main campus and three off-campus locations. The institution had an enrolment of 3,500 undergraduate and graduate students at four locations. The main campus offered traditional undergraduate programs during the day and traditional graduate programs in the evening. The second location was an off-campus site located 5 miles from the main campus and offered adult-centered, undergraduate and graduate accelerated degree programs and hybrid programs in the evenings and on Saturdays. The third location was an off-campus site situated 20 miles from the university's main campus and offered traditional undergraduate programs during the day and traditional graduate programs in the evenings and on Saturdays. The fourth location was an instructional site located 50 miles from the university's main campus and offered one accelerated graduate program. The university owned the property at the main campus and the off-campus sites 5 miles and 20 miles from the main location. The university rented space at the off-campus site 50 miles from the main campus.

For the purposes of this study, the main campus and the locations 5 miles and 20 miles from the main campus were the focus of the study. The off-campus site located 50 miles from the main campus would not be included in this study for the following reasons: location was a rental facility used for classroom instruction only, all academic and administrative duties related to the instructional site were assumed by university staff

whose offices are located at other university locations, and the off-campus location opened in Fall 2010 and the sample size was less than 30 students.

The population of this study included nontraditional college students. The target population included nontraditional students enrolled in on- and off-campus graduate degree programs. The sample included graduate students enrolled at the university's main campus and two off-campus locations. The sample size was approximately 800 students based on enrollment figures from the Spring 2010 enrollment data set. A questionnaire was administered to the sample for four reasons:

1. Determine adult students' perceptions of support services offered at the multiple sites of a university located in the northeast region of the United States.

2. Determine the extent of use and level of satisfaction of these services. Identify the importance of the services by gender, program of study, and campus or location site.

3. Gather information on what was most important and least important to adult students.

Using multiple sites at the same university allowed the researcher to acquire sufficient responses to ensure ample samplings so that generalities could be made from the results. Using multiple sites allowed the researcher to compare and contrast services at multiple locations. In addition, using multiple sites and varied graduate degree programs helped to ensure that a proper demographic mix of students was represented in the study.

Instruments

In a review of the literature, a need to provide research on the support service needs of adult graduate students was identified. The researcher identified the Student

Opinion Survey of Four-Year Institutions (see Appendix A) as a valid and reliable survey instrument. This instrument was developed by the ACT, a recognized organization in the field of educational measurement, which assisted educational institutions and researchers in the identification and solution of educational problems. The Student Opinion Survey for Four-Year Institutions, utilizing a Likert-type scale, was designed to explore students' perceptions of 4-year institution's programs, services, and environment of the institution. This instrument required approximately 20 minutes to complete.

The instrument included four sections. In Section I, demographic and background information on the participants was gathered. Responses in Section II provided data on the college services, specifically, data on the usage of services by students and the level of satisfaction of these services. In Section III, data on the level of satisfaction of the college environment were amassed. Section IV was a section for an additional set of multiple-choice questions (see Appendix B). In this section, the researcher listed a set of support services to gather data on the most important and least important to nontraditional students.

A pilot test was conducted with 12 administrators who worked with adult students. This allowed the researcher to gain feedback on the readability and completion time of the survey. It also allowed for comment on the survey content within Section IV. Based on the feedback, the questions developed by the researcher in Section IV were refined.

Procedures

Design. A quantitative study, with a qualitative component, was conducted on the support services offered at the university's main campus and two off-campus locations. A comparative study conducted on the support services offered at the university's main

campus and at two off-campus locations. The study was descriptive and used research methods to analyze the services that current students perceived as most valuable to their academic endeavor. Descriptive statistics were reported about the student population enrolled in classes at the three university locations.

The researcher enlisted the assistance of faculty colleagues to administer the survey. The survey was administered in paper format to adult students enrolled in graduate degree programs at the on-campus and two off-campus locations. The researcher contacted each of the faculty members individually by e-mail and letter to discuss the project (see Appendices C and D), and explain the process for distributing and collecting the questionnaire. The choice to administer a paper version of the questionnaire was made because one of the potential challenges was a low response rate to an online survey. The average rate of return for online surveys to adult graduate students at the host university was less than 10%. Although each graduate student enrolled at the university was issued a university e-mail account, the university where the research was conducted did not have a policy in place where students were required to use the university-issued e-mail as the official means of communication. Therefore, graduate students were not required by policy to check university e-mail, and this typically resulted in a less than 10% response rate by graduate students to online surveys.

A cover letter was distributed with the survey outlining the purpose of the study, ensuring anonymity, and thanking the students for their participation (see Appendix E). The researcher used a cross-sectional survey design with a 5-point Likert-type scale to gather data at one point in time that identified four areas of consideration:

1. What support services are perceived available at the university's on- and off-campus locations?

2. To what extent do nontraditional students use the support services at the university's on- and off-campus locations?
3. Does the importance of particular services vary significantly by gender, degree program, or campus or site location?
4. What support services are most important and least important to adult students enrolled in graduate degree programs?

Copies of the survey instrument were distributed to faculty members at each of the locations. Faculty members were asked to distribute the survey in class. The survey took no more than 20 minutes to complete so that faculty at each location could have the students complete the survey during the regularly scheduled class meeting, preferably at break time. If the faculty member could not administer the survey during class time, the faculty member was instructed to ask the students to return the survey during the next scheduled class period. The faculty member collected the surveys and returned them to the researcher in a sealed envelope furnished to them by the researcher. The surveys were hand delivered to the researcher by the university intercampus mail services department.

Data analysis. A quantitative study, with a qualitative component, was conducted and descriptive statistics were reported about this population. A comparative study was completed on the support services offered at the university's on campus and at two off-campus locations. The surveys were sent to ACT to be scanned by their system and the results returned to the researcher. This was done to ensure accuracy in results. The data were input into SPSS to determine trends of central tendency. The data were analyzed on several variables, including the program of study and location of study.

Limitations

One challenge was the issue of homogeneity as the additional survey questions for

Section IV were developed. The writer needed to be cautious of researcher bias with respect to what support services should be included in Section IV of the final survey. Because the researcher was the director of a branch campus, the researcher piloted the survey with 12 colleagues in order to include all support services that were available to students and not just the support services available at the campus where the researcher was located. However, the researcher had to recognize that adding questions could lengthen the survey and the researcher needed to be sensitive to the time it would take to administer the survey.

A second challenge was that, because students may be enrolled in one or more classes and at multiple locations, duplication of responses must be addressed. The directions included the instructions that, if a student has completed the survey instrument in another class, the student was asked to return the survey with only the first section marked. This allowed the researcher to cull the surveys to prevent double responses from individual students.

Chapter 4: Results

Research studies and related literature in adult learning theory substantiated the educational needs of the traditional student and the nontraditional student differed significantly (Bash, 2003; Brookfield, 1986). As the enrollment of adult students in higher education continued to increase, higher education continued to offer more types of academic programs on and off campus to meet the programmatic needs of these students; however, there was little research available that quantified the support service needs of adult students enrolled in on- and off-campus graduate degree programs (Linnartz, 2005; Skouras, 2001).

The purpose of this quantitative study, with a qualitative component, was to identify the support service needs of graduate students enrolled in programs on campus and at off-campus locations. The researcher sought to determine if there was a difference in graduate student use of services by gender, program of study, and campus location. The researcher also sought to determine the graduate students' satisfaction with services offered and to identify the most important services to students enrolled in graduate programs. Study findings may result in a better understanding of the support service needs of graduate students attending class on campus and at off-campus locations.

In chapter 4, the data collected from the survey of graduate students, the statistical treatment, and analysis of the data are documented. The findings of the research questions were presented in sequence. The purpose of this study was to identify the support service needs of adult students enrolled in graduate programs on campus and at off-campus locations.

Research Questions

Four research questions were addressed in the study:

1. To what extent do nontraditional students use the support services at the on- and off-campus locations at the university?
2. What is the nontraditional student satisfaction with the support services offered at the university's on- and off-campus locations?
3. Does the use of particular services vary significantly by gender, degree program, or campus or site location?
4. What support services are most important and least important to adult students enrolled in graduate degree programs at the university?

The ACT Student Opinion Survey was distributed to a stratified random sample of 720 graduate students participating in courses during the fall 2011 semester at a university's on campus and its two off-campus locations. Specifically, the surveys were distributed in November 2011 and surveys were received until December 15, 2011. All students surveyed in the 51 participating courses were officially accepted into graduate degree programs. A student volunteer was asked to collect the surveys from participants in each of the classes.

The surveys from the university's main campus were returned to the researcher in postage paid envelopes. The surveys from off-campus Location A were returned to the researcher's office. The surveys from off-campus Location B were retrieved by the researcher at Location B. A total of 524 students responded to this survey, resulting in a response rate of 72%. Forty-three unusable surveys were identified. Eighteen surveys were damaged in shipping and 25 students self-identified as having taken the survey in a previous class. Responses from 481 usable surveys were sorted out by the location. The responses from the usable surveys were sent to the ACT in Iowa for scanning and data analysis. The response rates are found in Table 1.

Table 1

Survey Response Rates

Category	On campus	Off-Campus		Total
		Location A	Location B	
Surveys distributed	221	421	78	720
Responses received	147	332	55	521
Response rate %	67	76	71	72

The scanned survey data in comma-separated value format was received on a CD for further statistical analysis in the SPSS computer software program. Frequencies and percentages were checked for Section II, Parts A and B; Section III; and Section IV of the survey data. Pearson's chi-square was calculated for the level of satisfaction with support services for those students who used the services as per Section II, Part B, and Section III of the instrument. Linear interpolation was used to replace missing data in Section II and Section III of the data. A Scheffe's test was run on data in Section III for further analysis of student satisfaction. The most important and least important services for graduate students were reported in Section IV of the instrument.

Presentation of Findings

The findings of the study were presented in six sections. Section I contained demographics that include age, race and ethnicity, gender, marital status, hours employed weekly, financial aid status, and current enrollment status at the university. Section II contained data analysis regarding Research Question 1, utilizing data from Section II,

Part A, of the instrument. Section III contained data analysis regarding Research Question 2, utilizing data from Section II, Part B, and Section III of the instrument. Section IV contained data analysis regarding Research Question 3, utilizing data from Section II, Part A, of the instrument. Section V contained data analysis regarding Research Question 4, utilizing data from Section VI of the instrument. Lastly, Section VI contained a qualitative analysis from student responses to the open-ended questions section of the instrument.

Section I: Demographics

A review of the literature has demonstrated there has been a significant increase in enrollment of the adult learner (Donaldson & Townsend, 2007; University Continuing Education Association, 2009; U.S. Department of Education, 2010). As this student population continues to rise, understanding the characteristics of the adult learner was necessary to adequately meet this particular student body's needs. The demographics of the respondents were useful in obtaining characteristics of members of the graduate student population regarding their work and families, and how students compare with the characteristics described in the review of the literature.

Age. Knowles (1980) noted that a person who is an adult to the extent that they are performing social roles typically assigned by society to those considered to be adults such as roles role of a spouse, parent, responsible citizen, and others. Both personal choice as well as occupational demands results in increasing amount of adults to enroll in graduate programs. Further, adults are goal oriented and typically know what they want to attain when they enrol in a program; therefore; classifying this student population as adults will lead to developing and implementing support services to meet their unique needs. The age of the sample (see Table 2) is consistent with the literature on adult

learners (Bash, 2003; Knowles, 1980).

Table 2

Age Group of Nontraditional Students

Age group	No.	% of total scanned
18-22	12	2.5
23-25	124	26.5
26-29	154	32.4
30-39	115	24.2
40-61	67	14.1
62 and over	1	0.2
All	480	100.0

Note. Total number of nontraditional students = 480. There were five responses left blank.

Gender. The gender of the sample consisted of 19.7% male and 80.3% female. This sample was consistent with the gender ratio at the institution where the research was conducted; however, it was inconsistent with the national statistics. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2010), the gender distribution in graduate programs in the United States was 39% male and 61% female. The variance in gender may be attributed to the programs of study offered at the institution where the research was conducted, which will be addressed in the Program of Study section.

Program of study. The program of study for the student body sample consisted of 68.4% in education, 15.8% in social and behavioral sciences, 13.6% in business administration, and 2.2% in nursing and allied health. The sample size was consistent

with the percentage of total graduate enrollments at the university. The higher female ratio could be attributed to the high percentage of students enrolled in the graduate education program.

Education as a professional occupation attracted females at a higher percentage than males because teaching was viewed as a nurturing profession, which was consistent with maternal female traits (Marconis, 2010). Marconis (2010) noted that 98% of preschool or kindergarten teachers were female and, although more males enter the profession in secondary and postsecondary education, the profession is female dominated. Therefore, the higher percentage of females in the sample (80.3%), although not consistent with national statistics (61%), was consistent with the demographics found at the institution where the research was conducted.

Racial and ethnic group. The race and ethnicity of the sample consisted of 83.5% Caucasians, 5.4% African American or Black, 3.8% Puerto Rican, Cuban, or other Latino or Hispanic. The sample also consisted of 2.1% designated as other racial groups, 1.9% Asian American, Oriental, or Pacific Islander, 0.4% Native American (Indian, Alaskan, Hawaiian), 0.2% Mexican American or Mexican origin. One percent left the field blank and 1.7% preferred not to respond. The sample race and ethnicity were consistent with the demographics found of the institution research in this study.

Marital status. The marital status consisted of 63.0% unmarried (single, divorced, widowed), 34.2% married, 0.8% separated. Two percent of the respondents preferred not to respond and left this field blank. The survey instrument did not segment the 63.0% unmarried status list.

Hours employed per week. Twenty-six percent of the students were working under 30 hours per week. Seventy-four percent of the students were working a minimum

of 30 hours per week. Of the 74% working a minimum of 30 hours per week, many students indicated they worked over 40 hours per week.

Enrollment status Thirty-four percent of the students self-identified as attending full time and 66% self-identified as attending part time. The institution where the research was conducted did not have full-time graduate programs. All students are admitted on a part-time status; therefore, students were self-identifying as being in attendance full time. This may be related to financial aid as illustrated in the Financial Aid Status section.

Financial aid status. Forty-two percent of the students reported receiving some type of financial aid assistance. Graduate students enrolled in courses totaling in six or more credits are eligible to apply for Federal Financial Aid (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Students may be interpreting their eligibility for financial aid as being enrolled as a full-time graduate student.

Section II

Research Question 1. To what extent do nontraditional students use the support services at the on- and at off-campus locations at the university? The support services listed in the ACT Student Opinion Survey for Four-Year Institutions instrument were used as a benchmark for the research. Twenty-three support services were listed in Section II, Part A, of the Student Opinion Survey instrument. Day care support services were not available at on campus and at Off-Campus Location A and Off-Campus Location B. Residence hall services and programs were not available at Off-Campus Locations A and B. College mass transit services were not available at Off-Campus Location A. In Table 3, details of college support services and students who have used the services on campus and the Off-Campus Locations A and B are documented.

Table 3

College Services and Usage at University Location for Students

	On Campus		Off-Campus Location A		Off-Campus Location B	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Support services						
Parking facilities	104	91.2	214	85.3	30	83.3
Academic advising services	101	84.2	206	82.7	31	93.7
Library facilities and services	99	85.3	218	86.5	20	55.6
Computer services	70	60.3	156	61.2	17	47.2
Financial aid services	68	57.6	149	64.5	14	13.6
Food services	39	32.2	54	20.4	6	14.6
College orientation services	14	11.5	68	25.5	19	50.0
Honors programs	11	9.1	11	4.0	3	7.5
College social activities	9	7.3	29	10.7	3	7.5
Career planning services	9	7.3	23	8.6	4	10.5
Credit-by-exam programs	6	4.9	9	3.3	3	7.3
College tutorial services	5	4.1	18	6.6	4	10.0
Job placement services	4	3.3	11	4.1	3	7.9
Recreation and intramural programs	4	3.3	12	4.4	5	12.5
Student health services	4	3.3	9	3.3	3	7.7
Residence hall services	3	2.4	NA	NA		
Veterans services	3	2.4	8	2.9	3	7.3
Student employment services	3	2.4	12	4.4	4	10.0
College mass transit	2	1.6	NA	NA	3	7.3
Personal counseling services	1	.8	14	5.2	4	10.8
Cultural programs	1	.8	8	3.0	3	7.3
Student health insurance program	1	.8	5	1.8	3	7.5

Note. NA = support services not available at this site.

Seven services out of the 22 listed in Table 3 were used by more than 10.0% of nontraditional students at the main campus: parking (91.2%), library facilities and services (85.3%), academic advising (84.2%), computer services (60.3%), financial aid (57.6%), food services (32.2%), and college orientation (11.5%). The support services used by less than 10.0% of the students at the main campus were honors programs, college social activities, career planning services, credit-by-exam programs, college tutorial services, job placement services, recreation and intramural programs, student health services, residence hall services, veterans services, student employment services, college mass transit, personal counseling services, cultural programs, and the student health insurance program.

Eight services out of the 22 listed in Table 3 were used by more than 10.0% of the nontraditional students at Off-Campus Location A: library facilities and services (86.5%), parking (85.3%), academic advising (82.7%), financial aid (64.5%), computer services (61.2%), college orientation services (25.5%), food services (20.4%), and college social activities (10.7%). The support services used by less than 10.0% of the students at Off-Campus Location A were honors programs, career planning services, credit-by-exam programs, college tutorial services, job placement services, recreation and intramural programs, student health services, residence hall services, veterans services, student employment services, personal counseling services, cultural programs, and the student health insurance program.

Twelve services out of the 22 listed in Table 3 were used by more than 10.0% of the nontraditional students at Off-Campus Location B: academic advising (93.7%), parking (83.3%), library facilities and services (55.8%), computer services (47.2%), college orientation services (50.0%), food services (14.6%), financial aid services,

(13.6%), recreation and intramural programs (12.5%), personal counseling services (10.8%), career planning services (10.5%), and college tutorial services (10.0%). Further analysis of service use by location can be found in Section IV.

Section III

Research Question 2. What is the nontraditional student satisfaction with the support services offered at the university's on- and off-campus locations? It was important that college administrators and faculty be cognizant of the unique needs of the adult learner. It was also important that institutions assess the satisfaction of support services currently offered so that modifications to support services can be made based on the collected assessment data.

Section II, Part B, of the instrument: Level of satisfaction. Section II, Part B, of the instrument listed 23 support services. Linear interpolation was used to replace missing data due to low use of services. In Table 4, satisfaction of the students who have used the service based on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 5 (*very satisfied*) to 1 (*very dissatisfied*) were illustrated.

The researcher identified the six services used by more than 10% of the student population at the three instructional locations. A summary of those services was illustrated in Table 5. Students identified a high satisfaction in the areas of library facilities and services, computer services, and financial aid services, and academic advising services. Parking facilities and services satisfaction was ranked at 13 out of 22. Student satisfaction regarding food services was ranked 21 out of 22. Pearson chi-square test was used to identify statistical significance of satisfaction among the main campus, Off-Campus Location A, and Off-Campus Location B. A statistical significance at $p < .05$ was identified with six of the 22 support services used. The results appear in Table 6.

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics for Item-Level Responses

Item	Rank	Average	SD
Library facilities and services	1	4.39	.66
Personal counseling services	2	4.21	.86
Honors Program	3	4.21	.69
Computer Services	4	4.10	.81
College—sponsored social activities	5	4.03	.81
Financial aid services	6	3.95	.96
Academic advising services	7	3.90	.92
Student employment services	8	3.89	.87
Recreational and intramural programs and services	9	3.87	1.09
College orientation program	10	3.85	.88
Student health services	11	3.78	.63
Career planning services	12	3.77	.94
Parking facilities and services	13	3.74	1.11
Credit-by-examination program	14	3.73	.62
Student health insurance program	15	3.67	.47
Cultural programs	16	3.60	.49
College-sponsored tutorial services	17	3.59	1.11
Veterans services	18	3.57	.90
Residence hall services	19	3.50	.50
College mass transit services	20	3.14	1.55
Food services	21	3.13	1.20
Job placement services	22	3.00	1.30

Note. No data was available for daily time services.

A chi-square value of .000 was found in library facilities and services. This statistical significance in satisfaction can be attributed to the fact there are no physical library services at Off-Campus Location B. Fifty-six percent of the students at Off-Campus Location B use library services, as compared to 86% of the students at Off-Campus Location A and 85% of the students at the main campus. The students attending classes at Off-Campus Location B must use online library services or travel to the library at one of the other locations, resulting in lower satisfaction for library facilities and services.

Table 5

Detailed Descriptive Statistics for Item-Level Responses

Item	Rank	Average	SD
Library facilities and services	1	4.39	.66
Library facilities and services	1	4.39	.66
Computer Services	4	4.10	.81
Financial aid services	6	3.95	.96
Academic advising services	7	3.90	.92
Parking facilities and services	13	3.74	1.11
Food services	21	3.13	1.20

A chi-square value of .034 was found in residence hall services. This was indicative of the fact that there were no residence halls on Off-Campus Locations A and B. Students from any university location can utilize the residence halls on-campus if needed; however, there are no residence halls at the off-campus locations.

A chi-square value of .004 was found in food services. There were no food

service operations at Off-Campus Locations A and B. There were vending areas and cafeteria space at the off-campus locations, but food service was not available. This significance was supported by the low satisfaction of food services at Off-Campus Locations A and B.

Table 6

Analysis of Variance for Satisfaction of Support Services

Support services	Statistical significance*
Library facilities and services	.000
Residence hall services	.034
Food services	.004
Cultural programming	.017
College orientation	.000
Veterans services	.016

* statistical significance at $p < .05$

A chi-square value of .017 was found in cultural programming. Seven percent of the students at Off-Campus Location B utilized cultural programming, as compared to 3.0% for Off-Campus Location A and 0.8% at the main campus. This higher level of use and satisfaction at Off-Campus Location B might be indicative of the construct of the academic unit at the location. Off-Campus Location B housed a self-contained academic unit with dedicated staff. A goal of this academic unit was high interaction with the students within this division.

A chi-square value of .000 was found in college orientation programming. Fifty

percent of the students at Off-Campus Location B used college orientation services, as compared to 25.5% of the students at Off-Campus Location A and 11.5% at the main campus. The statistical significance might be attributed to the program requirements for specific programs. Certain programs required students to attend orientation sessions, and data from Research Question 3 would explain the statistical significance in more detail.

A chi-square value of .016 was found in veterans services. This service was used by 7.3% of the students used this service at Off-Campus Location B, as compared to 2.9% at Off-Campus Location A and 2.4% at the main campus. Off-Campus Location B promoted programs that were attractive to adult students in need of flexible schedules, and the admissions staff located at Off-Campus Location B attended programs that were focused on supporting veterans.

Section III of the Instrument: College Environment

Section III of the survey instrument consisted of 42 aspects of the college environment. These variables were grouped under six major categories: academic, admissions, rules and policies, facilities, registration, and a general category. The academic category consisted of 11 variables, admission of four variables, rules and policies of six variables, facilities of eight variables, registration of four variables, and general group of nine variables. The groupings of the variables under these categories were listed according to the ACT instrument's format and are listed in the figure.

Student level of satisfaction with college environment was compared among on campus and the Off-Campus Locations A and B. An analysis of variance was calculated for each of the 42 questions to determine if there was statistical significance of student satisfaction among students on campus and at the off-campus locations. Linear interpolation was used to replace missing data due to low use of services. The mean and

analyses of variance were calculated setting the statistical significance at $p < .05$ level.

The results of the analyses are represented in Table 7.

<p>Academic</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Testing/grading system 2. Course content in your major field 3. Instruction in your major field 4. Out-of-class availability of your instructors 5. Attitude of the faculty toward students 6. Variety of courses offered by this college 7. Class size relative to the type of course 8. Flexibility to design your own program of study 9. Availability of your advisor 10. Value of the information provided by your advisor 11. Preparation you are receiving for your future occupation 	<p>Facilities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 22. Classroom facilities 23. Laboratory facilities 24. Athletic facilities 25. Study areas 26. Student Union 27. Campus bookstore 28. Availability of student housing 29. General condition of buildings and grounds <p>Registration</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 30. General registration procedures 31. Availability of the courses you want at times you can take them 32. Academic calendar for this college 33. Billing and fee payment procedures
<p>Admission</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. General admissions procedures 13. Availability of financial aid information prior to enrolling 14. Accuracy of college information you received before enrolling 15. College Catalog/admissions publications 	<p>General</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 34. Concern for you as an individual 35. Attitude of college nonteaching staff towards students 36. Racial harmony at this college 37. Opportunities for student employment 38. Opportunities for personal involvement in campus activities 39. Student government 40. Religious activities and programs 41. Campus media (student newspaper, campus radio, etc.) 42. This college in general
<p>Rules and Policies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Student voice in college policies 17. Rules governing student conduct at this college 18. Residence hall rules and regulations 19. Academic probation and suspension policies 20. Purposes for which student activity fees are used 21. Personal security/safety at this campus 	

Figure. Details of variables in each category in Section III of the instrument.

The differences in the perceived level of satisfaction of students at the university were significantly different in one category: admissions. The Scheffe's test was run to determine the mean difference between the university locations in the category of admissions to determine the location of the statistical significance. The results are found in Table 8.

Table 7

Comparison of Mean Satisfaction of Students at the University's Instructional Locations

Category	On-campus <i>M</i>	Off-campus		Sig.
		Location A <i>M</i>	Location B <i>M</i>	
Academic	2.932	2.993	2.804	.120
Admissions	2.865	3.037	2.813	.043*
Rules and policies	2.494	2.569	2.523	.727
Facilities	2.479	2.471	2.364	.614
Registration	3.096	3.200	3.000	.103
General	2.476	2.620	2.437	.154

*The mean difference is significant at $p < .05$

The results in Table 8 confirmed that the students were significantly less satisfied with admissions services on-campus as compared to Off-Campus Location A. Two factors could be attributed to this statistical significance. These factors were administrative support for students and the centralized decision-making authority, both on the main campus.

Adult students might feel more comfortable at the off-campus locations because administrators and faculty who chose to work at off-campus sites did so because they wanted to create and support access for students who were otherwise unable to attend classes on traditional campuses in a traditional format (Flora & Hirt, 2008). The admissions office was readily available to meet with students when a request was made, and the admissions officer at Off-Campus Location A was given latitude to have a

flexible schedule to meet applicant's time constraints.

The on-campus admissions office was highly structured. This structure was necessary to keep track of the appointment schedules of multiple counselors, thus, leading to inflexible schedules. In addition, all admissions decisions were made at the on-campus admissions office and, therefore, any delay in admissions decisions negatively impacted the on-campus admissions office.

Table 8

Multiple Comparisons With Dependent Variable: Admissions Satisfaction

Location	University site	<i>M</i> difference
On campus	Off-Campus Location A	.0379*
	Off-Campus Location B	.4236
Off-Campus Location A	On campus	.0379*
	Off-Campus Location B	.3857
Off-Campus Location B	On campus	.4236
	Off-Campus Location A	.3857

*The mean difference is significant at $< .05$.

Section IV

Research Question 3. Does the use of particular services vary significantly by gender, degree program, or campus or site location? Twenty-three support services were listed in Section II, Part B, of the Student Opinion Survey instrument were used as a benchmark for the research. Day care support services were not available at the on-campus location and Off-Campus Locations A and B. Residence hall services and programs were not available at Off-Campus Locations A and B. College mass transit services were not available at Off-Campus Location A.

Level of use by gender. The gender of the sample consisted of 19.7% male and 80.3% female. This sample was consistent with the gender ratio at the institution where the research was conducted. In Table 9, the number of students in the sample who responded using the services by gender is documented.

Ten of the 22 services listed in Table 9 were used by more than 10% of the male students. These services were parking facilities and services (84.5%), academic advising services (80.3%), library facilities and services (77.0%), financial aid (59.7%), computer services (58.1%), food services (29.9%), college orientation program (23.4%), college sponsored social activities (15.2%), career planning services (14.5%), and college tutorial services (11.4%). The support services used by less than 10.0% of the male population were personal counseling services, job placement services, recreational programs, student health services, student health insurance, student employment services, residence hall services and programs, cultural programs, credit-by-exam program, honors program, college mass transit services, and veterans services.

Seven of the 22 services listed in Table 9 were used by more than 10% of the female students. These services were parking facilities and services (87.5%), academic advising services (85.3%), library facilities and services (85.3%), computer services (60%), financial aid services (54.8%), food services (22.0%), and college orientation program (23.9%). The support services used by less than 10.0% of the female population were personal counseling services, job placement services, recreational programs, student health services, student health insurance, student employment, residence hall services or programs, cultural programs, credit-by-exam program, honors program, college mass transit services, career planning services, college tutorial services, college sponsored social activities, and veterans services.

Table 9

Students Using College Services and Usage at University by Gender

Support services	Male <i>n</i>	Male %	Female <i>n</i>	Female %	Sig.
Academic advising services	57	80.3	214	85.3	.584
Personal counseling services	6	8	13	3.7	.249
Career planning services	11	14.5	25	7.2	.199
Job placement services	5	6.7	13	3.7	.454
Recreational programs	7	8.9	14	4.0	.172
Library facilities and services	57	77.0	279	85.3	.014*
Student health services	6	7.7	10	2.8	.105
Student health insurance	5	6.3	4	1.1	.028*
College tutorial services	9	11.4	18	5.1	.149
Financial aid services	46	59.7	184	54.8	.681
Student employment services	7	9.0	12	3.4	.132
Residence hall services and programs	6	4.1	9	2.5	.032*
Food services	23	29.9	76	22.0	.062
College sponsored social activities	12	15.2	29	8.2	.233
Cultural programs	5	6.3	7	2.0	.081
College orientation program	18	23.4	83	23.9	.638
Credit-by exam program	7	9.0	11	3.1	.201
Honors program	4	5.1	21	6.0	.503
Computer services	43	58.1	198	60.0	.927
College mass transit services	4	5.1	10	2.8	.645
Parking facilities and services	60	84.5	286	87.5	.691
Veterans services	7	9.0	7	2.0	.007*

*The mean difference is significant at $< .05$.

The results documented that a significant statistical difference was found in the

level of use in four categories between male and female students. These services were library facilities and services, student health insurance, residence hall services and programs, and veteran's services. Of these four services, one service was used by more than 10% of the male and female student populations, library facilities and services with a statistical significance of $p < .014$. Library facilities and services were used by 85.3% of the females versus 77% of the males.

Level of use by program of study. The program of study identified four programs of study: education, social and behavioral science, business administration, and nursing and allied health. The sample consisted of enrollments of 68.4% in education, 15.8% in social and behavioral sciences, 13.6% in business administration, and 2.2% in nursing and allied health. In Table 10, the number of students in the sample who responded using the services as reported by program of study is documented.

Five services out of the 22 listed in Table 10 were used by more than 30% of the students in all four of the programs researched. These services were academic advising services, library facilities and services, financial aid, computer services, and parking. More than 30% of the students in business administration, nursing and allied health, and social behavioral sciences attended college orientation programs. Fifteen percent of the students in education attended a college orientation program.

The Pearson chi-square was used to identify statistical significance in the services determined by program of study. The statistical significance was found in 13 of the services (Table 11).

Although statistical significance as found in 13 of the 22 services, only two services identified were used by more than 30% of the student population. These services are library facilities and services and college orientation programs.

Table 10

College Services and Student Usage at University by Program of Study

Support services	Business		Education		Nursing & allied health		Social & behavioral sciences	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Academic advising	43	91.5	227	85.3	7	77.8	43	75.4
Personal counseling	6	11.3	9	3.2	1	11.9	2	3.4
Career planning	8	15.1	18	6.4	2	22.2	6	10.3
Job placement	5	9.6	9	3.2	1	11.1	3	5.1
Recreational	5	9.1	9	3.1	2	25.0	3	5.1
Library facilities and	35	68.6	222	83.5	9	100.0	49	89.1
Student health	4	7.4	7	2.4	0	0.0	2	3.4
Student health insurance	4	7.3	3	1.0	0	0.0	0	0
College tutorial	5	9.3	14	4.9	1	11.1	5	8.3
Financial aid	22	41.5	156	58.9	5	55.6	36	63.2
Student employment	5	9.3	10	3.5	0	0.0	1	1.7
Residence hall	4	7.3	9	3.1	0	0.0	0	0
Food	10	18.9	72	25.5	2	25.0	5	8.5
College-sponsored social activities	4	7.4	25	8.7	1	11.1	9	15.5
Cultural	4	7.4	3	1.0	2	22.2	1	8.3
College orientation	25	47.2	44	15.4	3	33.3	25	43.9
Credit-by exam	4	7.4	10	3.5	0	0.0	1	1.7
Honors	4	7.4	16	5.6	2	22.2	1	1.7
Computer	22	45.8	162	60.2	6	66.7	38	66.7
College mass transit	4	7.4	6	2.1	0	0.0	1	1.7
Parking facilities and	40	80.0	229	87.7	9	100.0	51	87.9
Veterans	4	7.3	6	2.1	0	0.0	2	3.3

The library facilities and services were used less by students in the business administration 68.6% versus education at 83.5%, nursing and allied health at 100%, and social and behavioral sciences at 89.1%. This may be due to the fact that there were no library facilities at Off-Campus Location B, the location where the majority of the business administration classes were held.

Table 11

Statistical Significance by Program of Study

Support Services	Statistical significance*
Job placement services	.002
Recreational programs	.002
Library facilities and services	.009
Student health services	.000
Student health services	.000
Residence hall services/program	.001
Food services	.004
Cultural programs	.000
College orientation program	.000
Credit-by exam program	.000
Honors program	.000
College mass transit services	.000
Veterans services	.000

*The mean difference is significant at $< .050$.

The college orientation services were used by 47.2% of the students in business administration, 43.9% of the students in social and behavioral sciences, 33.3% of the students in nursing and allied health, and 15.4% of the students in education. This disparity might be due to the academic structures of the schools and requirements for orientations.

Level of use by location. The sample consisted of responses separated by location of study. The students were located on campus and the Off-Campus Location A and B. In Table 12, the use of support services by campus location are illustrated.

Seven types of support services out of the 22 listed in Table 12 were used by more than 10% of nontraditional, graduate students on campus. The support services used by the students were parking facilities (96.2%), academic advising services (84.2%), library facilities and services (85.3%), computer services (60.3%), financial aid services (57.6%), food services (32.2%), and college orientation services (11.5%). The support services used by less than 10% of the students on campus were honors programs, college social activities, career planning services, credit by exam programs, college tutorial services, job placement services, recreation and intramural programs, student health services, residence hall services, veterans services, student employment services, personal counseling services, cultural programs, and student health insurance program.

Eight types of support services out of the 22 listed in Table 12 were used by more than 10% of nontraditional students at the Off-Campus Location A. The support services used by the students were library facilities and services (86.5%), parking facilities (85.3%), academic advising services (82.7%), financial aid services (64.5%), computer services (61.2%), college orientation services (25.5%), food services (20.4%), and college sponsored social activities (10.7%).

Table 12

College Services and Usage by Students by Instructional Location

	On campus		Off-Campus A		Off-Campus B	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Support Services						
Parking facilities	104	91.2	214	85.3	30	83.3
Academic advising services	101	84.2	206	82.7	31	93.7
Library facilities and services	99	85.3	218	86.5	20	55.6
Computer services	70	60.3	156	61.2	17	47.2
Financial aid services	68	57.6	149	64.5	14	13.6
Food services	39	32.2	54	20.4	6	14.6
College orientation services	14	11.5	68	25.5	19	50.0
Honors programs	11	9.1	11	4.0	3	7.5
College social activities	9	7.3	29	10.7	3	7.5
Career planning services	9	7.3	23	8.6	4	10.5
Credit by exam programs	6	4.9	9	3.3	3	7.3
College tutorial services	5	4.1	18	6.6	4	10.0
Job placement services	4	3.3	11	4.1	3	7.9
Recreation and intramural programs	4	3.3	12	4.4	5	12.5
Student health services	4	3.3	9	3.3	3	7.7
Residence hall services	3	2.4	NA	NA		
Veterans services	3	2.4	8	2.9	3	7.3
Student employment services	3	2.4	12	4.4	4	10.0
Personal counseling services	1	.8	14	5.2	4	10.8
Cultural programs	1	.8	8	3.0	3	7.3
Student health insurance program	1	.8	5	1.8	3	7.5

Note. NA = not available on this campus.

There were 13 support services used by less than 10% of the students on campus. Those services included honors programs, career planning services, credit by exam programs, college tutorial services, job placement services, recreation and intramural programs, student health services, residence hall services, veterans services, student employment services, personal counseling services, cultural programs, and student health insurance program.

Eleven types of support services out of the 22 listed in Table 12 were used by more than 10% of nontraditional students at the Off-Campus Location B. The support services used by the students were academic advising services (93.3%), parking facilities (83.3%), library facilities and services (55.6%), college orientation programs (50.0%), computer services (47.2%), food services (14.6%), financial aid services (13.6%), recreation and intramural services (12.5%), personal counseling services (10.8%), career planning services (10.5%), and college tutorial services (10.0%). The support services used by less than 10% of the students at the Off-Campus Location B were honors programs, credit-by-exam programs, job placement services, student health services, residence hall services, veterans' services, student employment services, cultural programs, and student health insurance program.

This researcher observed the following trends with use of services. The top four services used by students at all three locations were library facilities and services, academic advising, computer services, and parking. Fifty percent of the students at Off-Campus Location B attended a college orientation program, where less than 30% of students on campus and at Off-Campus Location A attended a college orientation program. A possible reason might be the program requirements of the programs offered at Off-Campus Location B.

More than 30% of the students use food service on campus. Less than 20% of the students use food services at Off-Campus Locations A and B. Although there were cafeterias located at Off-Campus Locations A and B, there were no food services available—only vending services.

Finally, there were no fitness facilities at Off-Campus Location B, yet more than 10% of the students report using the services. Because Off-Campus Location B was less than 5 miles from the main campus location, it was feasible that students from Off-Campus Location B might use the full service fitness center at the main campus. The close proximity afforded the Off-Campus Location B students access to services they would otherwise not have access to.

Section V

Research Question 4. What support services are most important and least important to adult students enrolled in graduate degree programs at the university? In Section V, students were asked to rank the importance of the 25 services (see Appendix A) on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from A (*most important*) to and E (*least important*). This additional survey instrument was originally designed and tested in the survey course, ARC 8915, offered through Nova Southeastern University. It was further refined based on initial feedback from volunteer participants, a cross section of university employees and retested with the same group of employees before being used. Revisions to the survey instrument were made after feedback was received from the pilot group. The additional survey was developed to determine if there is a correlation between the use of service results in Section II and Section III of the ACT survey instrument as compared to students' perception of what was most important to them as nontraditional students. More than 30% of the students identified the following services A (*most*

important) and B (*important*) as can be seen in Table 13.

Table 13

Respondents Ranking of Support Services

Support Service	% Most important or important
Academic advising	70.6
Library facilities and services	65.6
Financial aid services	59.0
Computer services	57.5
Job placement	49.8
Career planning	49.7
Registrar's office services	48.1
Parking	43.7
Business office services	42.9

The researcher compared the data from Section IV, services identified as most important or important to more than 30% of the students, to the data in Section II, Part A, on the services most used by students. The data showed that the seven services used by more than 30% of nontraditional students at the university's main campus and two off-campus locations were parking, academic advising, library facilities and services, computer services, financial aid, food services, and college orientation services. Of these services used, all but one, college orientation services, was ranked most important or important by students in section IV. The value or perceived value of college orientation programs was not most important or important less than one third of the student body

even though over 30% of the students have been involved in orientation programs.

Two services listed by more than 30% of the students as most important or important are career planning (49.7%) and job placement (49.8%). Eighty-nine percent of the students reported that they are aware of career planning, yet only 8.4% of the students reported using the services. In addition, 93% of the students reported being aware of job placement services; however, only 4.2% of the students reported using these services. Therefore, is it that the services were not available when the students needed them or not available at the location they were studying, or was there a perception that the service the university was offering did not meet the adult student's needs.

Section VI: Comments and Suggestions From Respondents

This researcher enlisted the assistance of a doctorally prepared corater to review the qualitative section, Section V, Comments and Suggestions on the ACT survey instrument. Section V of the survey instrument allowed students to make additional general comments and suggestions if they so choose to (see Appendix F). Of the 481 surveys returned, written responses were received from 40 students. Fourteen students from on campus responded, 19 students from Off-Campus Location A responded, and two students from Off-Campus Location B responded. The following themes were generated from student comments, and were presented in descending order from the most mentioned comments to the least mentioned comments, separated out by campus, and then combined.

The most prevalent theme mentioned most by graduate students on campus was the need for additional parking for students in the evenings. Next, students were requesting more variety in the time classes were offered and suggested the university offer classes on Saturdays, and also offer online options for students. Students also

requested better regulation of the heating and air conditioning, and then were requesting easy access to the buildings, which students need to have student identification cards to gain access. As well, students asked for more resources for adults making career changes and, finally, they were looking for additional access to faculty outside of the office.

Students enrolled in classes at Off-Campus Location A were first requesting more variety of times of classes, Saturday classes, online options and alternative delivery of classes, and more class offerings. Students at Off-Campus Location A would appreciate increased bookstore hours. Students were requesting better regulation of the heating and air conditioning. The next most common request was for the university to provide adequate computer support services. Next, students were requesting additional tutoring services above what was currently offered, and then they noted the need for a real food service operation, not just vending machines. Finally, students were looking for more practical application to the theoretical work.

Two students enrolled in classes at Off-Campus Location B commented. The first respondent noted that individual choose to attend an off-campus location for classes even though the individual was aware that the location did not provide all of the services that were provided at the on campus location. A second comment was a request that the program administration provide clear communication and consistent expectations for students.

There were two main themes that surfaced most frequently across university locations. The first theme was the need for alternative course delivery modes and options for students. The second theme was the need for the heat and air conditioning to be properly regulated in the classrooms. It was noted that the primary theme on campus of providing adequate parking was not an issue at the two branch locations.

In the final chapter, the findings of the research study in relation to the research questions are discussed. This chapter presents conclusions drawn from the data, recommendations for higher education institutions on the importance of support services for graduate students on campus and at off-campus locations. The chapter will conclude with suggestions for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to identify the support service needs of adult students enrolled in graduate programs on campus and at off-campus locations. Specifically, this quantitative study, with a qualitative component, sought to determine if there was a difference in graduate student use of services by gender, program of study, and campus location; determine the level of satisfaction with existing services; and identify what support services were most important to this segment of the adult student population. In this chapter, the findings of the study are discussed in relation to the research questions, conclusions drawn from the data are presented, recommendations for higher education institutions are made, and suggestions for future research are offered.

Discussion

Adult learners were a growing and vital segment of American higher education, yet there was limited research available on the support service needs of a segment of this population, graduate students. Much of the existing research on graduate students had been based on the observations of administrators. There were few studies related to graduate student experiences on campus and at off-campus locations; however, there was very limited research comparing and contrasting student experiences on campus and at off-campus locations. This research sought to compare and contrast graduate student support service needed on campus and at off-campus locations. This study advanced the research on adult learners by identifying the usage, satisfaction, and importance of support services to the graduate student population enrolled at multiple locations.

Demographics

Adults were subject to increasing responsibility and complexities in life, such as achieving competence, becoming interdependent, establishing identity, and clarifying

purposes (Schlossberg et al., 1989). Oftentimes, due to these responsibilities, adults had limited time for educational endeavors after a full day of work, family, personal, and social responsibilities. The results of the demographic survey of the adult students in this research study were consistent with the literature (Bash, 2003; Brookfield 1986; Cross, 1981; Knowles, 1980).

Eighty-three percent of the students were between the ages of 23 and 39 years. Seventy-four percent of the students worked 30 hours or more per week, with 30% of the survey respondents noted working more than 40 hours per week. Eighty percent of the respondents were female, which was higher than the national average of 60% (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). The higher percentage of females participating in this study may be due to the fact that 68% of the survey respondents were in the field of education.

Finding time for education after a full day of work was of concern to these students. The respondents expressed a need for courses to be offered in alternative delivery modes, thus, leading to flexible scheduling and more options for this population. The characteristics found in the survey matched descriptions mentioned in the literature about the demographics of adult learners.

Conclusions for Research Question 1

Research Question 1 was asked to determine graduate students' use of support services. The support services listed in the ACT Student Opinion Survey of 4-Year Colleges and Universities instrument were used as a benchmark for the research. Twenty-three support services were listed in Section II, Part A, of the Student Opinion Survey instrument. Day care support services were not available at the on-campus location and at Off-Campus Locations A and B. Residence hall services and programs were not available

at Off-Campus Locations A and B. College mass transit services were not available at Off-Campus Location A.

The survey results showed that library facilities and services, academic advising, computer services, parking, financial aid services, food services, and college orientation services were used by the majority of the graduate students surveyed. The remainder of the services, such as college social activities and recreational programs, were used by a much smaller percentage of graduate students. The survey results were consistent with the literature that adults were goal-oriented and returned to an educational environment when they required new skills or information (Bash, 2003, Brookfield, 1986). Adult learners identified the support services that would best help them meet their needs and directly support and facilitate their education. While parking is the most used service by students at all locations, academic advising and library facilities and services followed parking in highest use by students. Academic advising and library services assisted students in attaining their goals, unlike social activities and cultural programs, which although are available, are less appealing to adult graduate students who had little time for these activities due to family and job responsibilities. The high utilization of advising services, library facilities and services, financial aid, and computer services lent to the practicality of their particular learning experience.

Conclusions for Research Question 2

Research Question 2 was designed to determine graduate student satisfaction with support services offered on campus and at off-campus locations. Section II, Part B, and Section III of the ACT Student Opinion Survey for Four-Year Institutions instrument was used as a benchmark for the research. The survey results of Section II, Part B, showing high levels of satisfaction were found with the services most used by graduate students:

library facilities and services, computer services, academic advising services, financial aid services, college orientation, and parking. However, there were variations in the level of satisfaction based on instructional location.

There was high satisfaction with library facilities and services by the respondents attending classes on campus and at Off-Campus Location A; however, there was a statistically lower statistical satisfaction level with library facilities and services from students attending classes at Off-Campus Location B. This significance was attributed to the lack of library facilities at Off-Campus Location B. Although online library services are available to all student populations, the lack of facilities at Off-Campus Location B directly impacted student satisfaction with these services.

There was also an overall high level of satisfaction with parking; however, there was a slightly lower level of satisfaction for parking on campus as compared to Off-Campus Locations A and B. Although not statistically significant, students attending class on campus noted dissatisfaction with parking in the open-ended section of the survey instrument. This dissatisfaction might be attributed to the physical layout of parking on campus as compared to the off-campus locations. Parking on campus was dispersed around a 54-acre campus with multiple buildings and several parking lots. Abundant parking was not readily available near student instructional buildings, thus, leading to lower student satisfaction. In contrast, Off-Campus Locations A and B consisted of one instructional building with plentiful parking near multiple entrances.

There was low satisfaction with food services at all campuses. This is not surprising as Off-Campus Locations A and B did not have food service facilities, realizing low satisfaction. On campus, there was a cafeteria, however, it was located in a noninstructional building, thus, not convenient for adult learners.

The survey results suggested students ranked the facilities on campus slightly higher than at Off-Campus Locations A and B. Although the satisfaction was not statistically significant, this ranking might be attributed to the full range of services and facilities on campus, such as athletic facilities, full-service bookstore, and other amenities available on campus that were not available at the off-campus locations.

Students who attended classes at Off-Campus Location A were slightly more satisfied than the students on campus and at Off-Campus Location B in the areas of academics, admissions, rules and policies, registration, and general environment. Although the differences were not statistically significant, it was worthy of noting that elements of the centralized student and administrative service offices at off-campus locations might lend themselves to providing customized support to students. Branch campus locations offered many opportunities for student affairs officers to work with faculty and academic support services (McGrath, 2009). With this being said, the student satisfaction at Off-Campus Location B was not consistent with the student satisfaction at Off-Campus Location A. The student satisfaction at Off-Campus Location B was consistent with satisfaction on-campus. A number of elements could be attributed to these results. Off-Campus Location A had larger physical plant and more support services available to students than at Off-Campus Location B. Off-campus Location A had a physical library, bookstore, and an academic skills center on site, whereas Off-Campus Location B did not have these amenities on site. Although library and bookstore services were available online, the lack of a physical location, and the convenience of having these services readily available, might have led to the difference in satisfaction between students attending courses at Off-Campus Locations A and B. Additional research on the efficacy of online library services and bookstore services was needed in order to test this

hypothesis.

The survey results of Section III of the survey instrument consisted of respondent's satisfaction with 42 aspects of the college environment within six major categories: academic, admissions, rules and policies, facilities, registration, and a general category. The survey results of Section III determined that there was a statistically significant difference in student satisfaction of admissions services between on-campus admissions services and the Off-Campus Location A admission services. Respondents were significantly more satisfied with admissions services at Off-Campus Location A than on campus. The Off-Campus Location A office was in an environment where they were readily available to meet with prospective students as the admissions officer at Off-Campus Location A was given latitude to have a flexible schedule to meet applicants' time constraints. The on-campus admissions office was highly structured, due a need to accommodate both multiple counselors and the office hours are inflexible. In addition, all admissions decisions were made at on campus, therefore, any delay in admissions decisions or applicants who were denied admissions would negatively impact the on-campus admissions office. There was no significant difference in admission processes between Off-Campus Locations A and B.

Conclusions for Research Question 3

Research Question 3 was designed to determine if the use of particular services varied significantly by gender, degree program, and campus location. There were slight differences in the use of support services of males and females. Males used veteran's services and career services slightly more than females. Females used academic advising services slightly more than males; however, in the present study, only one statistically significant difference was identified related specifically to gender. Females used library

services significantly more than males. Eighty-five percent of the females used the library services and resources, as compared to 77% of the males.

The survey results identified significant differences in the use of two support services by program of study: library facilities and services and college orientation services. Students in the business administration program used the library facilities and services significantly less than students in the education, social and behavioral sciences, and nursing and allied health programs. The results were consistent with the fact that the business administration program was offered at Off-Campus Location B where the physical library was not present.

Statistical significance was also found in the students' use of college orientation programs by program of study. Attendance rates are higher at orientation programs where the attendance is required. A review of the literature noted that students identified the support services that would best help them meet their needs and directly support and facilitate their education and would opt out of services that did not meet their needs (Bash, 2003, Brookfield, 1986). All graduate programs included the offer of an orientation program; however, the programs that required student attendance resulted in higher attendance rates. Perhaps there was a perception that college orientation programs were not a valuable use of student's time and the university must do a more efficient job of communicating the values of attending orientation sessions.

The researcher sought to determine if the use of particular services varied significantly by campus location. The results showed that students attending courses off campus used more services than the students attending courses on campus. This study denoted that the majority of students at all locations used parking, academic advising services, library facilities and services, computer services, financial aid services, food

services, and college orientation services. The students at Off-Campus Location A were also involved in college-sponsored social activities. The students at Off-Campus Location B are also involved in recreation and intramural services, and they sought out personal counseling services, career planning services, and college tutorial services. These particular services were not available at Off-Campus Location B, but the proximity of Off-Campus Location B to the main campus was less than 5 miles, indicating that students would seek out services they felt they needed. The results indicated that personal contact, to some extent, was an important part of the educational experience for adult learners. Although many services were available online, adult students oftentimes sought out the personal interaction to enhance their educational experience.

Also, the research also demonstrated that students at Off-Campus Locations A and B used more services more frequently. This may be attributed to the fact that the support services were centralized in one facility. The support services on campus were dispersed over multiple buildings and multiple offices, thus, making it less convenient for students to utilize services.

Conclusions for Research Question 4

Research Question 4 was designed to determine what was most important to a graduate student. Section IV of the survey instrument collected the responses in ranking the importance of the 25 services. The results showed that graduate students placed high importance on academic advising and library facilities and services. Academic advising was rated as the most important or important service to 70% of the respondents, followed by library services and resources most important or important to 65% of the respondents. The data were consistent with graduate students' high usage of these services.

The results of Section IV of the survey suggested that students placed a much higher importance on career planning and job placement than the data on use of career services illustrated. Career planning services surveyed by the ACT survey instrument showed that less than 10% of the graduate students spanning three locations utilized career planning services, yet 50% of the graduate students ranked this service as most important or important. The researcher sought to determine if job placement services were also important to the students. The results suggested that job placement services were also important to half of the respondents. Many students are looking for additional help in areas, such as learning about job opportunities in their disciplines, and gaining effective job seeking skills. The administration should further investigate career services to determine the reasons for gaps in the use of career services, and perhaps investigate more effective communication strategies in this area. The institution should also investigate the feasibility of expanding career services to include job placement for graduate students.

Based on the responses in the comments and suggestions section of the survey, respondents revealed that they wanted a better variety of courses, flexible program opportunities, and opportunities to enroll in classes delivered in different modalities, such as online, blended, and an accelerated format. The university should provide additional opportunities for faculty and students to have contact outside of the classroom where students could contact faculty for advice on how to best meet their educational goals. The respondents were also looking for a comfortable environment where the heat and air conditioning is regulated.

Implications

Graduate students, regardless of where they attended classes, had definitive needs.

The adult learner desired easy access to services that were relative to their educational endeavors, such as academic advising, library facilities and services, and computer support. In addition, adult learners were also looking for a physical environment that met their specific needs, such as convenient parking, comfortable classrooms, bookstore access, and food services. It was the responsibility of an institution and adult educators to identify and provide the support services that are essential to the success of the adult learner.

There was a number of implications to be gathered from this research. Overall, graduate students, regardless of campus location, had similar needs, and the research indicated that the students required support services that were convenient and would directly support and facilitate their educational endeavors (Bash, 2003; Brookfield, 1986; Kelson & Lesik, 2005). This research identified the support services of academic advising, library facilities and services, computer services, and financial aid support services as critical to student success. The traditional structures and altruistic nature of institutions oftentimes provided additional support services for adult learners, yet these opportunities for social interaction and recreational activities were seen as less desirable by the graduate student who had family, work and social responsibilities outside of school.

Tannehill's (2009) research on adult student satisfaction with college and university services concluded that institutions that acknowledged the adult student as having different needs from traditional-aged students had a higher degree of student satisfaction. In addition, adult students paid more attention to important policies and regulations when they were not overwhelmed with information and communications that did not concern them. Institutions must determine the best mode of communication to

reach the graduate student population.

It was key that institutions assess their institutional commitment to, and the capacity for, meeting the needs of graduate students. This became particularly important with institutions that had branch or off-campus locations. As support services vary from institution to institution, support services would most likely vary from location to location at the same institution. Although the needs of graduate students were perhaps similar, the services provided at instructional locations differed, and these differences impacted student satisfaction. Institutions must assess the support services at multiple locations to determine if the level and types of support services were congruent with graduate student needs.

Graduate students valued flexible course schedules, convenient library services, convenient advising, and faculty were accessible. Assessing orientation sessions and communicating the value of these sessions was also important. Making critical services available when the students were on campus affirmed adults' value to the institution and made them a part of the university culture (Book, 2010).

The research also indicated that graduate students were looking to institutions as a resource for career planning. Institutions should have the capacity to address adult learners' life and career goals before or at the beginning of enrollment in order to assess and align its capacities to help learners reach their goals (CAEL, 2008). Services in this area included orientation sessions that help adults assess their educational decisions, and individual advising sessions to assist adults in career planning.

Recommendations

It is important for administrators and faculty who work with adult learners, particularly the graduate student population, to continue research in this area because

research on graduate students available at the time of this study was limited. The need for continued research regarding the support service needs of graduate students attending programs at off-campus locations is particularly urgent. There is limited research in this field, and advances in research would better assist administrators and faculty in meeting graduate student support service needs both on campus and at off-campus locations.

The success of graduate students is dependent on the institutional commitment to improve services identified as most important to this student population. Because students change constantly and, thus, their needs change constantly, it behooved administrators to survey graduate students regularly to determine their support service needs. Schlossberg et al. (1989) advocated the assessment of key structures within the support services areas. Institutions should determine their ability to provide needed services as conveniently and seamlessly as possible, and to improve services where improvement is required.

Time and convenience is of particular value to adult learners (Cross, 1981). Flexibility, convenience, and accessibility to support services that will lead to graduate students' educational success are needed. This includes flexible course schedules, convenient academic advising, and convenient library facilities and services. Orientations sessions should be assessed to ensure that the content is informative and will assist students in achieving their educational goals. Institutions should also utilize technology to build a sense of community within and outside of the classroom, and to provide timely and flexible educational and administrative services (CAEL, 2008).

Resources and infrastructure should be sufficiently allocated to all instructional sites to ensure quality and consistency across the institution. The competencies of the staff members in the service areas at the various locations should also be assessed to

ensure that staff at all locations is familiar with the needs of the diverse populations they serve. Training and development of staff at all locations is recommended if deficiencies are identified.

Institutions should strive to provide consistent facilities and support services across instructional locations to the extent possible. If providing the physical facility is not feasible, institutions should have the supporting organizational structures to support these services in an alternative manner, perhaps the online environment. Finally, college administrators need to adequately communicate to the students what services are available and how to access those services.

Limitations

One of the limitations was found in Section V of the survey instrument. Section V asked respondents to rank the importance of the 25 services (see Appendix A) on a 5-point Likert-type scale. The researcher observed almost identical responses from respondents for two of the services, career planning and job placement. The researcher recommends that further clarification regarding the distinct nature of the respective services is needed if additional research is conducted in this area with the graduate student population.

The second limitation is the homogenous nature of the population surveyed. Sixty-five percent of the respondents were in the education field. In addition, 84% of the respondents were Caucasians and 80% of the respondents were female, and perhaps research conducted with a more diverse population from various programs may lead to different results.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study was conducted in order to identify the usage, satisfaction, and

importance of services to the adult student population enrolled in graduate programs on campus and at off-campus locations. Additional support service needs were identified in the area of career services and job placement; therefore, additional research in this area is recommended. The research from this study indicated a low level of satisfaction for library services and support at the instructional site without a physical library although the online library services are available. The researcher suggests a need to conduct further research regarding the effectiveness of online library services. Finally, the researcher suggests the need to conduct additional research on the most effective way in which to communicate with graduate students what services are available and how to access those services.

In conclusion, it is incumbent upon administrators and faculty to become more aware of the unique needs of adult learners, particularly graduate students. In doing so, institutions are in a better position to provide the appropriate support services to meet this student population's needs. This will lead to a mutually beneficial experience and will affirm the importance and value of graduate students.

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Appendix A
Student Opinion Survey

STUDENT OPINION SURVEY

DIRECTIONS: The information you supply on this questionnaire will be kept completely confidential. However, if any item requests information that you do not wish to provide, please leave it blank. Your Social Security number is requested for research purposes only and will not be listed on any report.

A dual-point pen, nonballpoint ballpoint pen, marker, or colored pencil. Some items may not be applicable to you or to this college. If this is the case, skip the item or mark the "Does Not Apply" option. If you wish to change your response to an item, erase your first mark completely, and then fill in the correction. Select only ONE response for each item.

Please use a soft (No. 1 or 2) lead pencil to fill in the bubbles indicating your response. DO NOT use

SECTION I—BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Begin by writing your Social Security number in the larger boxes at the top of Block A. Then, in the column below each box, fill in the appropriate oval. Complete the remaining blocks by

marking the single most appropriate oval in each case

A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER (Identification Number)	B AGE	C RACE/ETHNIC GROUP	D INDICATE YOUR CLASS LEVEL: AT THIS COLLEGE	E FOR WHAT PURPOSE DO YOU ENTER THIS COLLEGE? (Select only one):																																																																																															
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SECTION II—COLLEGE SERVICES

For each service (or program) listed below, indicate whether or not you have used the service and, if you have used the service, your level of satisfaction with it. If a service is not offered at this college, mark "Not Available at This College" and leave Part B blank. If a service is offered

but you have not used it, mark "I Have Not Used This Service" and leave Part B blank. Indicate your level of satisfaction (Part B) only if you HAVE used the service.

PART A: USAGE			COLLEGE SERVICE OR PROGRAM	PART B: LEVEL OF SATISFACTION				
Have Not Used This Service	Have Used This Service	Not Available at This College		Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Academic advising service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Personal counseling service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Career planning service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Job placement service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Recreational and intramural programs and services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Library facilities and service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7. Student health services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	10. Financial aid service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11. Student employment service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	12. Residence hall services and programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	13. Food services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	14. College-sponsored social activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	15. Cultural programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	16. College orientation program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	17. Credit-by-examination program (CLEP, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	18. Honor program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	19. Computer services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	20. College mass transit service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	21. Parking facilities and service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	22. Veterans services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	23. Day care service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Please mark the oval indicating your level of satisfaction with each of the following aspects of this college. If any item is not applicable to you or to this college, fill in the

oval in the "Does Not Apply" column and proceed to the next item. Respond to each item by filling in only one of the six response alternatives.

		LEVEL OF SATISFACTION						
		Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Don't Know	
ACADEMIC	1. Teaching/grading system							
	2. Course content in your major field							
	3. Instruction in your major field							
	4. Use of class activities in your instruction							
	5. Attitude of the faculty toward students							
	6. Variety of course offered at this college							
	7. Class size relative to the type of course							
	8. Flexibility to design your own program of study							
	9. Availability of your adviser							
	10. Value of the information provided by your adviser							
ADMINISTRATIVE	11. Procedures you are following for your future occupation							
	12. General admission's procedures							
	13. Availability of financial aid information prior to enrolling							
	14. Accuracy of college information you received before enrolling							
RULES & POLICIES	15. College communication publications							
	16. Student rules in college policies							
	17. Rules governing student conduct at this college							
	18. Penalties for rules and regulations							
	19. Academic probation and suspension policies							
	20. Purposes for which student activity fees are used							
	21. Personal security/safety at this campus							
	FACILITIES	22. Classroom facilities						
		23. Laboratory facilities						
		24. Athletic facilities						
25. Study areas								
26. Student union								
27. Campus recreation								
28. Availability of student housing								
29. General condition of buildings and grounds								
SERVICES		30. General registration procedures						
		31. Availability of the courses you want at your own location						
	32. Academic advisors for the college (i.e., semester or teacher system)							
	33. Billing and fee payment procedures							
OTHERS	34. Concern for you as an individual							
	35. Attitude of the college's non-teaching staff toward students							
	36. Racial harmony at this college							
	37. Opportunities for student employment							
	38. Opportunities for personal involvement in campus activities							
	39. Student government							
	40. Recreational activities and programs							
	41. General media (student newspaper, campus radio, etc.)							
42. The college in general								

Note. The Student Opinion Survey (n.d.) was created by and available for purchase from ACT, PO Box 168, Iowa City, IA 52243-0168.

Appendix B
Section IV Questions

Section IV Questions

Please refer to Section IV-Additional Questions Section on the enclosed Student Opinion Survey and answer the following questions:

Please use the following information to complete Section IV of the questionnaire. Rate the support services listed below in order of importance using the following scale:

A.....Most Important

B.....Important

C.....Neutral

D.....Less Important

E.....Not Important

F.....Does not apply

1. Academic advising services
2. Personal counseling services
3. Career planning services
4. Job placement services
5. Recreational and intramural programs and services
6. Library facilities and services
7. Student health services
8. Student health insurance programs
9. College-sponsored tutorial services
10. Financial aid services
11. Student employment services
12. Residence hall services and programs
13. Food services
14. College-sponsored activities

- 15.Cultural program
- 16.College orientation program
- 17.Credit-by-examination program (CLEP, etc.)
- 18.Honors program
- 19.Computer services

PLEASE TURN OVER

- 20.College mass transit services
- 21.Parking facilities and services
- 22.Veterans services
- 23.Day care services
- 24.Registrar office services
- 25.Business office services

Thank you for your assistance!
Karen Galardi, Executive Director

Appendix C

E-Mail Prenotice Letter to Faculty

E-Mail Prenotice Letter to Faculty

September, 2011

Dear Colleague:

I am conducting research on support needs of graduate students at the main campus and branch locations of Holy Family U university as a part of my doctoral dissertation at Nova Southeastern University and am asking for your assistance in getting survey instruments to the students. Unlike much of the research that has been conducted on this topic, I am seeking responses directly from students and kindly ask for your assistance.

In a few days, you will be receiving a package of surveys for distribution to students in your Fall 2011 Holy Family University graduate course. Enclosed within this package is a short statement to students explaining the purpose of the research and asking for their participation. The survey instrument should take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Please distribute a survey instrument to each of the students in your next class meeting, please read an enclosed statement accompanying the survey, and ask a student volunteer to collect the completed surveys and return them to you. You may want to have the students work on the surveys during a scheduled break, but it is important that a student volunteer collect the surveys before the end of the class period. This will assist in the completion of the instrument. Please ask the student to the completed, sealed envelope to you. Kindly return the instrument to the following locations:

– You will receive an addressed, stamped envelope to return.

– Reception Desk

– Reception Desk

I appreciate your assistance in distributing and administering these instruments. I am surveying only Holy Family university students participating in coursework during the fall 2011 semester so your assistance is very important to the success of this project.

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact me at 267-341-4025 (days), 215-860-2415 (evenings) or via e-mail at kgalardi@holyfamily.edu.

Your assistance with this study is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Karen Galardi

Karen Galardi

Executive Director,

& Institutional Planning

Appendix D
Introduction to Faculty

Instructions for faculty

Total number of students

at this class session: _____

Instructions to Participating Faculty/Facilitators

I am collecting research on support needs of graduate students on-campus and at branch locations and am interested in having the students in your Fall 2011 semester course participate. Please distribute the enclosed survey to all of the students at your next class meeting and ask them to complete the instrument prior to the end of class. **Please note at the top of this form the number of students in class at the time you distribute the surveys, and kindly enclose this sheet with the completed surveys.**

Before distribution, please ask for a student volunteer to collect the surveys and put them in the enclosed envelope and give them to you prior to the end of class. Following class, can you please return the envelope to the following locations:

- You will receive an addressed, stamped envelope to drop into any mailbox.
- Reception Desk
- Reception Desk

Please read the following statement to students prior to

distributing the surveys: A doctoral student in the Nova Southeastern

University's Abraham S. Fischler School of Education and administrator at

Holy Family University is collecting research to determine what support

services are most important to you as a graduate student. She is asking you

to voluntarily participate in this research project at this time by completing a

survey. All responses will be totally anonymous and confidential.

Participation is voluntary and will not affect your grade in this course in any

way. Your input is vital to the success of this study.

Please complete a survey prior to the end of the class period using the pencils provided, and return the survey and pencils to (name of volunteer) to be returned to me. Please note that the directions to complete **Section IV of**

the Student Opinion Survey are also being distributed along with the survey. **Please refer to this form to complete Section IV.** If you have already completed this survey in another course, please indicate that on the top of the survey, including the university location –where you have previously completed the survey.

Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated! Thank you in advance for your time and efforts.

Karen Galardi, Executive Director, & Institutional Planning, Holy

Appendix E

Cover Letter to Students

November 2011

Dear Holy Family University Student,

I am a doctoral student in the Nova Southeastern University's Abraham S. Fischler School of Education and an administrator at Holy Family University. I am collecting research to determine what support services are most important to you as a graduate student. This research study is in partial fulfillment of the Doctor of Education degree at Nova Southeastern University, and as a doctoral student I am asking you to voluntarily participate in this research project at this time by completing a survey. All responses will be totally anonymous and confidential. Participation is voluntary and will not affect your grade in this course in any way. Your input is vital to the success of this study.

Please note that Section IA has been populated so that the survey is anonymous. Please complete a survey prior to the end of the class period using the pencils provided, and return the survey and pencils to me by placing them in the envelope in the front of the classroom. Please note that the directions to complete **Section IV of the Student Opinion Survey** are also being distributed along with the survey. **Please refer to this form to complete Section IV.** If you have already completed this survey in another course, please indicate that on the top of the survey, including the university location – _____ Campus, _____, or _____ – where you have previously completed the survey.

Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated! Thank you in advance for your time and efforts.

Sincerely,



Karen M. Galardi
Executive Director,

Appendix F

Respondents' Comments and Suggestions Section

Respondents Comments and Suggestions Section:

On-campus

Better parking for graduate students, more advanced notice of who is teaching which courses, more information regarding testing (Praxis), ACT 48 credits, PA certification and graduation.

More variety of times of classes and more offered in .

More classes offered after 4:30 p.m. (5 p.m. at the earliest).

More parking for students close to the classroom buildings (ETC).

It would be helpful if the door facing Grant Avenue to Aquinas Hall would open with our Student ID's. Just a suggestion...

Take another look at scheduling. More online or Saturday options please.

Both campuses, Phila. and is freezing. They need to fix the heating/air systems way too cold. We pay too much to have this experience.

Education master's program focuses on theory, providing virtually no practical strategies that would actually help a new teacher.

The college provides resources to support adults making career changes.

I love hfu!

It would be nice if graduate courses were offered during the day or in the afternoon.

Online or hybrid courses would be great too. Also, an NP or CSN program would be nice.

The library is a great resource all the librarians are knowledgeable and always willing to help.

Small class sizes.

Leaving time for the professor to discuss things after class and allowing more time for

office ours.

Off-campus Location A

As part of the tutoring services it would be nice to have a place that does proof reading, more bookstore hours at . More affordable textbook options compared to e-campus & amazon.

Students should not be made to take classes with redundant information.

The computers are very slow while using the internet

At times the advisors do not provide all the necessary information

There are no food services, just vending machines that are not always fully stocked.

Please get a working cafeteria that serves food during school hours.

Day care services-perhaps grad student can provide services for exchange for tuition.

Survey is too long.

Lower tuition

More course offerings (time and location)

There are two issues that I have with this college. Distance – the campus is 45 min to 1 hour away from where I live and it becomes very frustrating traveling back and forth.

Diversity-there is not a lot of diversity on my campus. In my counseling psychology program, I am being “trained” to be a multiculturally diverse counselor but my environment does not encompass what I’m being “trained” to be. I have an issue with that.

My answers were based on my experience in the graduate program at the campus.

More hours and more writing help center, more tutors.

Sometimes it is hard to fit the required classes around my work schedule as I work at

night. I was taking Saturday classes but they recently did away with them. It would be extremely helpful if they would offer graduate classes either during the day or on Saturdays.

Would like to see more Adlerian teachers!

I think the rooms are too cold.

More graduate courses should be offered in the criminal justice program that allows students to become more hands on in the perspective fields

The college is a nice atmosphere but I have had trouble in classes due to military obligations and it seems that it is of no concern to the teachers. The graduate level offers too few courses forcing a person to have to stay here for more time than they want. There is no student choice in what electives they would like to take. They just have to suck it up. Would like to see practical application of theoretical work.

Off-Campus Location B

Need better communications and a little more flexibility with working students as for taking courses. Don't let one student do it and not others. Don't let it be a fight when help is needed. Make sure your employees are all on the same page.

The campus I am attending is a segment of the main university. The campus I am at is for adults trying to earn accelerated degrees and therefore doesn't offer as many activities as offered on the traditional campus.